THE

WORKS

OF

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THE WORKS OF BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER,

WITH AN

INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY NOTES,

BY

HENRY WEBER, Esq.

VOLUME THE ONE,

CONTAINING

WIT WITHOUT MONEY.
THE SCORNFUL LADY.
THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY.
RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE.

EDINBURGH:

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HENRY RICHARD FOX,

LORD HOLLAND,

OF HOLLAND, IN LINCOLNSHIRE;

LORD HOLLAND OF FOXLEY;

AND

FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES,

THESE VOLUMES

ARE,

WITH HIS LORDSHIP'S PERMISSION,

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

OBLIGED AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.

INTRODUCTION.

It is a subject of universal regret, that, by the negligence and want of literary curiosity of our ancestors, we are left almost entirely in the dark respecting the private history of the most eminent authors of the seventeenth century. Any account of their lives, which can, at the present period, be prefixed to their works, appears meagre of incidents, and defective in the most material and interesting parts. This is particularly the case with regard to Beaumont and Fletcher, to whom, in the scale of the dramatic poets of that age, the second place has generally been awarded. As it becomes the peculiar duty of an editor to collect every thing which is known respecting his author, he is led continually to regret, that, with the exception of a few anecdotes, perhaps not even sufficiently au-

thorised, the whole of his narrative consists of an enumeration of their literary compositions.

Both Beaumont and Fletcher had the advantage of being honourably descended, and, consequently, of receiving an excellent education; and they had both relatives who distinguished themselves in literature. It is scarcely possible to give a separate account of the life of each, and accordingly a chronological arrangement has been adopted in the following pages, which commences and concludes with Fletcher, who was born ten years before his friend Beaumont, and survived him an equal number of years.

Dr Richard Fletcher, Bishop of London, the father of our poet, was a man of considerable eminence. His influence at the court of Queen Elizabeth procured him a very rapid succession of ecclesiastical preferments. He was born in Kent, and educated at Cambridge, either in Bennet or Corpus Christi college, and admitted at that university about the year 1561. He took the degree of Master of Arts at Oxford, in 1572, having previously obtained the same degree at Cambridge. The 15th of November, 1583, he was appointed Dean of Peterborough, and, in that capacity, attended at the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, at Fotheringay-castle,

on the 8th of February, 1586. On this occasion, he stands charged with having embittered the last moments of that unfortunate princess, by his intemperate zeal to convert her to the protestant faith. He was appointed Bishop of Bristol, which preferment he is said to have obtained on condition of farming out the revenues to some of the principal courtiers, by which means he greatly impoverished the bishopric. He was translated to the see of Worcester, in 1592, and from thence to that of London, to which he was elected the 30th of December, 1594, and confirmed the 10th of January following. A few days after, he entered into a second marriage[1] with the Lady Baker of Kent, sister to Sir George Gifford, which so highly offended Queen Elizabeth, who, in spite of her pretended attachment to the reformed religion, encouraged the celibacy of the clergy, and was peculiarly averse to the second marriage of a bishop, that she either reprimanded him personally, or forbid him to appear at court by message. He in vain applied to Lord-treasurer Burleigh to intercede with the queen in his be-

[1] It is entirely unknown who was the first wife of Bishop Fletcher, and the mother of our poet.

half, for he was suspended from the functions of his office, by Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, February 23, 1594. He made, however, sufficient interest to be reinstated in his bishopric after some months, but the queen was inflexible to his solicitations to be restored to favour and readmitted at court. It is said, however, that she condescended to pay him a visit in his retirement at Chelsea, where he died suddenly, the 15th of June, 1596. Camden says that his death was occasioned by the immoderate use of tobacco. He was buried in St Paul's cathedral without any monument. In his person he was, like most of Queen Elizabeth's favourites, remarkably handsome, in his behaviour courtly, and distinguished for his eloquence. Among other qualifications, he was extremely dexterous in the management of the great horse. Fuller says that he was condemned for pride by those that did not know him, and for humility by those that did. He left no publications of any sort behind him.

Dr Giles Fletcher, his younger brother, was celebrated for the diplomatic talents he displayed at the courts of Scotland, Germany, the Low-Countries, and Russia, and for the accurate observations which he drew up respecting the lat-

ter country. Anthony Wood informs us, that he became an excellent poet; his poetical fame was, however, completely eclipsed by his two sons, Giles and Phineas, who are justly ranked amongst the most eminent poets of the seventeenth century.

John Fletcher, thus honourably descended and related, was born in the year 1576, and educated at Cambridge, probably at Bennet college, to which his father was a benefactor by his will. He is said to have made a considerable proficiency at the university; and, indeed, his works prove him to have been a classical student of respectable acquirements. That he was master of the more fashionable modern languages, such as French, Italian, and Spanish, is also evident from his having borrowed the plots of many of his dramas from works in those languages, which had not at that time been translated. At what period he left the university we are not at present able to decide, but it does not appear that he took any honourable degree. From two entries in the manuscript of Henslowe, proprietor of the Rose theatre, preserved at Dulwich college,[a] Mr Malone con-

[a] "October 14, 1596. Lent unto Martyne [Slaughter] to fetch Fleatcher, vi. s." Again, "Gave the company to give

cludes, that Fletcher wrote for the stage as early as 1596, when he was only twenty years of age. If these entries really refer to our poet, which is by no means certain,[3] as his name is not affixed to any of the plays enumerated by Henslowe, his earliest performances, in which, according to the custom of the time, he probably joined some of the dramatic poets of the day, are to all appearance irretrievably lost. It is equally uncertain at what period his friendship and copartnership commenced with Beaumont, of whose birth and parentage we now come to give an account.

Francis Beaumont was descended from the very ancient and honourable family of the Beaumonts of Grace-dieu, in Leicestershire.[4] His

Fleatcher, and the have promised me payment, xx. s."—*Shakspeare*, ed. 1803, vol. III. p. 380.

[3] Perhaps these entries refer to Laurence Fletcher the comedian, who appears at the head of the license granted to the king's servants, 19th May, 1603, and who died in the year 1608.

[4] In "Two Bookes of Epigrammes and Epitaphs," &c. by Thomas Bancroft, London, 1639, 4. the following address "To Grace-dieu" occurs:

"Grace-dieu, that under Charnwood stand'st alone,
As a grand relick of religion,
I reverence thine old but fruitful worth,
That lately brought such noble Beaumonts forth,

father, Francis, was appointed one of the judges of the Common Pleas, the 25th of January, 1593, and died at Grace-dieu, the 22d of April, 1598. By his wife, Ann Pierpoint, daughter of Sir George Pierpoint of Holme, he left three sons. The eldest, Henry, was knighted, April 23, 1603, and died in the year 1605. Sir John Beaumont, the second son, who was born in 1582, and who survived our author thirteen years, was a poet of very considerable talents,[5]

Whose brave heroic muses might aspire,
To match the anthems of the heavenly quire;
The mountains crown'd with rocky fortresses,
And shelt'ring woods secure thy happiness,
That highly-favour'd art (tho' lowly placed)
Of heaven, and with free nature's bounty graced:
Herein grow happier, and that bliss of thine,
Nor pride o'ertop, nor envy undermine."

[5] Drayton, in his Epistle "To my dearly loved Friend, Henry Reynolds, Esq. of Poets and Poesy," thus celebrates Sir John Beaumont, and his brother Francis, together with William Browne, the author of Britannia's Pastorals:

"Then the two Beaumonts and my Browne arose,
My dear companions, whom I freely chose
My bosom friends; and in their several ways,
Rightly born poets, and in these last days
Men of much note, and no less nobler parts,
Such as have freely told to me their hearts,
As I have mine to them."——

I must here acknowledge the obligations, for which, as the biographer of Beaumont, I am indebted to Mr Nichols's elaborate and erudite History of Leicestershire.

of which he has left us a distinguished proof in his poem on Bosworthfield, remarkable for the spirit of the poetry and the easy flow of the versification. The dramatic poet, Francis Beaumont, was the youngest son, and was born at Grace-dieu, in the year 1586.[6] In the beginning of Lent-term, 1596, he was admitted, at the same time with his two elder brothers, gentleman commoner of Broadgate-hall, now Pembroke college, at that period much resorted to for the study of the civil and common law. After lea-

[6] Great confusion has been occasioned among the biographers of our poet, by the circumstance, that there were at least three Francis Beaumonts alive in 1615. Both Wood and Oldys confound the dramatic writer with his namesake, the master of the Charter house, of the family of the Beaumonts of Cole-Orton, who was educated at Cambridge, was also poet, and died in 1624. He prefixed an epistle to Speight's edition of Chaucer, printed in 1598, containing an apology for the licentious passages which occur in that poet's writings. Oldys, supposing this epistle to have been the production of the dramatic writer, concludes, that the age at which the latter is said to have died must be founded on erroneous information, as it was not likely that a judgment from a boy of thirteen should be preferred by the judicious editor of Chaucer. Wood is led by a similar mistake to ascribe the education of our poet to Cambridge. Another Francis Beaumont was the son of Sir John Beaumont, and nephew to the dramatic writer. He afterwards became a jesuit, and prefixed a copy of verses to the poems of his father, printed in 1629. Mr Nichols informs us, that there was a Francis Beaumont of Peter-house, Cambridge, and another of St John's, but professes himself ignorant of their dates.

ving the university, he studied for some years in the Inner-Temple; but the vivacity of his imagination, and the bent of his genius toward dramatic poetry, seems to have alienated his mind from any intense application to the law. His acquirements in classical learning, and the other sciences fashionable at the time, are, however, acknowledged to have been very considerable.

In the year 1602, when he was only sixteen years of age, he published the fable of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, in the paraphrastic style of the Italian poets of the seventeenth century. If he had exhibited no further specimens of his genius after this juvenile attempt, he would never have been ranked among the illustrious poets of his country. Fortunately, he attached himself to the stage, and became the intimate of Ben Jonson and Fletcher. At the age of nineteen, he addressed a copy of verses to the former, on his comedy of The Fox, first produced in the year 1605, replete with the soundest criticism, and evidencing a familiar acquaintance with the models of the ancient drama; thus justifying the high opinion which was entertained by his contemporaries of his superior judgment, particularly by Jonson, who is

said to have submitted the plots of his dramatic performances to his young friend. His intimacy with Fletcher led to a still closer connection, which continued without interruption till the early death of Beaumont. It is not improbable that Fletcher, at first, like Ben Jonson, took advantage of the judgment of Beaumont, to submit his performances to his correction, and that they were gradually led, by a congeniality of mind, to compose dramas in conjunction.

As the greater proportion of the dramatic poets of the reigns of Elizabeth and James were in needy circumstances, and, in a great measure, depended on the exertion of their minds for their daily bread, they were naturally led to form copartnerships of talent for the sake of expedition, and to supply the eager demand of the London audiences, who had, but a short time before, become partial to the rational entertainment afforded by the stage, and who were proportionably attached to it, and eager for a continual supply of theatrical novelties. The papers of Henslowe, the proprietor of the Rose theatre, prove, that a great number of dramas was produced at one only of the numerous playhouses then existing, between the years 1597

and 1603; and the greater proportion of these were written by two, three, or four poets, in combination. At a later period these copartnerships became less frequent, but they still continued common, till the destruction of the stage, during the civil wars, by the ruling fanatics.[7]

The dramatic alliance between Beaumont and Fletcher was, perhaps, originally induced by this universal practice of the age; but the immediate causes which led to it were different and more honourable; not the urgency of providing for their subsistence, but their strict intimacy in private life, the similarity of their disposition and habits, and the wonderful congeniality of their genius. From an expression in Sir William Davenant's prologue, written for a revival of the Woman-Hater, it may be inferred, with a considerable degree of probability, that Fletcher began to be actively employed in writing for the stage about the year 1605. If he actually wrote as early as 1596, his endeavours were probably insignificant, and confined to a share in some of the

[7] The prevalency of similar alliances among the Spanish dramatists of the seventeenth century has been noticed by the editor on another occasion.—See the Dramatic Works of John Ford, Edinburgh, 1810, 8. vol. I. p. xiv.

dramas of the time, in conjunction with other poets.

The period of the continued partnership between Beaumont and Fletcher does not seem to have commenced till about the year 1608. In 1606, or 1607, Fletcher produced the comedy of the Woman-Hater, without the assistance of his friend. In this play, which was acted by the children of St Paul's, Fletcher followed the footsteps of Ben Jonson, then at the height of his fame, with very considerable success; but, if we may believe the tradition mentioned by Dryden, that our poets produced two or three unsuccessful plays before the appearance of Philaster, the Woman-Hater must have met with a reception similar to that which The Knight of the Burning Pestle and The Faithful Shepherdess subsequently experienced.

Another early composition, which Fletcher wrote before he entered into a regular and continued coalition with Beaumont, is the tragedy of Thierry and Theodoret, which, from the epilogue, seems to have been the first which he furnished for the king's servants, who acted at Blackfriars, and whom, in the sequel, he regularly supplied with dramatic novelties, both in

conjunction with Beaumont, and after the death of the latter, when he depended principally on the exertions of his own unassisted imagination.

The first play, by which the united poets received any extensive reputation, according to a tradition mentioned by Dryden, who lived near enough to the time in which our authors flourished to have received authentic information, was Philaster, or Love lies a-bleeding; and Mr Malone has, with considerable probability, conjectured the first appearance of that drama to have taken place in 1608 or 1609. That the audiences of those days should have been blind to the excellencies of the Woman-Hater will not be thought strange, when we reflect that The Faithful Shepherdess and The Silent Woman were condemned at a time when their respective authors were at the full zenith of reputation. But the excellencies of Philaster were so striking, that they could hardly fail to obtain the applause they are so justly entitled to. The account, however, in the quartos, that the play was "divers times acted," is not so flattering as we should have expected; but, it must be recollected, that the inhabitants of the metropolis were at that time familiarised with productions of the first rank from the pens of Shakspeare and

Jonson. Macbeth, Lear, Julius Cæsar, and Volpone, had appeared shortly before, and, though Philaster possesses excellencies little inferior to those of the plays just enumerated, they are not of so prominent and striking a nature. A circumstance, which does not seem to have been usual at the time, took place; the present play was performed both at the court-theatre in the Blackfriars, and at the Globe, which was chiefly frequented by the citizens.

We have no account of any plays by our authors having been brought on the stage in the year 1609; but, as there are several which are known to have been written by them conjointly, the dates of which cannot now be ascertained, it is not likely that the year passed without their offering some production to the public. In the year 1610, The Maid's Tragedy[9] is conjectured to have been brought on the stage. The

[9] Winstanley, whose testimony is unfortunately not of the highest value, relates a well-known anecdote which seems to refer to The Maid's Tragedy. As our poets were planning the plot of one of their tragedies at a tavern, (probably their favourite resort, the Mermaid in Cornhill,) Fletcher was overheard by some of the people of the house, to say, "I'll undertake to kill the king." Information was given of this apparently treasonable design; but the poet's real purpose being explained to have been the murder of a theatrical monarch, he was dismissed without any further troublesome inquiry.

great excellence of that drama ensured it a favourable reception, and, undoubtedly, contributed in no small degree to extend the fame of the poets, who began to be considered as rivals not unworthy to cope with Shakspeare and Ben Jonson. They were, however, not uniformly successful. Either in this, or one of the years immediately preceding, Fletcher brought on the stage his Faithful Shepherdess, a dramatic pastoral, in which he successfully rivalled the delightful productions of Tasso, Guarini, and Bonarelli. The exquisite beauty of the poetry, combined with as much dramatic effect as could be expected from the nature of the piece, induced his literary friends to augur a degree of success equal to that which the Italian poems, just mentioned, had obtained in their own country: but the work was not calculated for the gross appetite of the vulgar; and, like many of the noblest productions of the stage, it suffered a complete condemnation from the audience. This unjust decision roused the indignation of Fletcher's most illustrious literary friends, and they were anxious to express their admiration of the poem, and the indignant sensations of their minds at the treatment it had received.[1]

[1] Vol. IV. p. 6, *et seq*.

Beaumont, his great associate, addressed a copy of verses to him, which are strongly characteristic of his powers of severe reproof, and, at the same time, of his ardent affection for the poet. He exposes the chicanery which influenced the judges of the pit; the insolent arrogance and pedantic usurpation of some individuals who pronounced the decision, and the contemptible and abject submission of the rest, who looked up to those pedants as infallible oracles: In short, the lively picture which he exhibits of the rules and manner of damning an excellent production, which happened to be unsavoury to the vulgar palate, is, it is to be feared, not only a true portrait of the audiences of those times, but may be applied to those of our own day, making allowance, not only for the change of manners, but for the still more general corruption of taste for the drama, which is an indelible stigma on our contemporaries. Beaumont was ably supported in his defence of this beautiful poem by his friend Ben Jonson, who had himself sufficient reasons to complain of the injustice of popular ignorance, and who, in the following words, ironically characterises these theatrical judges:

The wise and many-headed bench, that sits
Upon the life and death of plays and wits,

(Composed of gamester, captain, knight, knight's man,
Lady or *pucelle*, that wears mask or fan,
Velvet, or taffata cap, ranked in the dark
With the shop's foreman, or some such brave spark,
That may judge for his sixpence,) had, before
They saw it half, damned thy whole play.—

To the testimonies of Beaumont and Jonson, those of Chapman, the translator of Homer, and a dramatic writer of great celebrity at the time, and of Field, both a player and a poet, were added ;* and Fletcher subjoined three copies of verses to Sir Walter Aston, Sir William Skipwith, and Sir Robert Townshend, and an address to the reader, in which he modestly, (but, at the same time, casting bitter reflections on the ignorance of the auditors, who, he says, expected a comedy of clowns, with their curtail-dogs, and the usual amusement of Whitsun-ales, cream, wassel, and morris dances,) informs the lower rank of the public of what description a pastoral comedy is or should be. Eight years after his death, and more than twenty after its original representation, The Faithful Shepherdess was acted before the court with applause, which was followed by a revival at Blackfriars, where the audience had an opportunity of retracting their former unjustifiable censure.

The public were not satisfied with exposing their want of taste, by condemning this pastoral, but, as if determined not to countenance any performance which did not follow the usual beaten path of dramatic composition, they passed the same sentence soon after on The Knight of the Burning Pestle. The severe treatment of this burlesque comedy, the first of the kind which had appeared on the English stage, and of equal, if not superior, excellence to any similar productions which have appeared since, was, no doubt, occasioned by the London citizens being liberally ridiculed in the course of the composition, though the principal aim of the satire was levelled at the absurd romances and ranting plays of the time. From the dedication, which the bookseller, Walter Burre, prefixed to the quarto edition, which he published in 1613, it is evident that the play was first represented in the year 1611. The publisher asserts, that the appearance of Don Quixote was a full year later than that of the play; but there is little doubt that he alludes to the publication of the English translation in 1612. The original work of Cervantes, which met with such extraordinary success in Spain, was, no doubt, soon imported into England; the connection

between the courts of St James's and Valladolid at the time led to a considerable intercourse between the two countries, and the study of the Spanish language had become very fashionable in England. Fletcher was well read in Spanish authors, from whom he borrowed several of his plots; and the author of The Knight of the Burning Pestle had certainly read Don Quixote in the original language. Whether this drama was composed by our poets conjointly, or by one of them, unassisted by the other, is a question which cannot at present be satisfactorily answered, the authorities being contradictory. [a]

In the same year, our poets, in conjunction, brought out the tragi-comedy, entitled, A King and No King, at the Globe; and, from the number of editions which it underwent before and after the Restoration, it appears to have met with a most favourable reception, and to have maintained a regular and steady popularity. It was, according to the usual practice of the dramatic proprietors of the time, withheld from the press till 1619, and then published, probably from a copy fraudulently obtained, by Thomas Walkley, who exhibits such ignorance in his de-

[a] See the introduction to The Knight of the Burning Pestle in this volume.

dication to Sir Henry Nevill, as to speak of the authors' further labours, though Beaumont had been dead for four years at that time. If we can give credit to the assertions of commendatory writers, we may conclude, on the evidence of Robert Herrick, an elegant poet of the period, that the plot of this tragi-comedy was furnished by Fletcher; and, from the versification, which exhibits the strongly marked characteristics of that poet in very few scenes only, it appears that the execution was principally Beaumont's. Bishop Earle asserts the claims of the latter to the character of Bessus in very strong terms.

It was probably in this, or one of the years immediately preceding, that our united poets produced the collection of short dramas, entitled, Four Plays, or Moral Representations, in One. In offering this variegated entertainment to their audiences, they followed the example of some of their predecessors, but it does not appear that their work met with any great degree of approbation. From internal evidence, Beaumont appears to have furnished the two first Triumphs, and his associate the two others. It is not unlikely that the three Triumphs of Honour, Love, and Death, were originally outlines for regular plays; and that the poets, per-

haps, not finding sufficient incidents in the plots to extend them to five acts, resolved to combine these outlines into one, by means of the fictitious audience before whom they are represented.

At the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the Count Palatine, the inns of court were anxious to express their loyalty and good wishes, by offering magnificent entertainments to the court. Chapman was employed by the society of Lincoln's Inn to furnish a masque for the occasion; and that of the Inner-Temple applied to their fellow and associate, Beaumont, to write another for them and Gray's Inn, which was performed on Valentine's day 1612-3, with great magnificence.

In the year 1613, our poets brought several pieces on the stage with different degrees of success. The Honest Man's Fortune was licensed by Sir George Buck, the master of the revels, and acted at the Globe. That theatre being consumed by fire in the same year, the licensed copy of this play, together with that of Shakspeare's Winter's Tale, and no doubt many others, was destroyed; and, in 1624, the players were obliged to have recourse to Sir Henry Herbert, the successor of Sir George Buck, for a new license. We have no account of the success of

this piece at its original representation, but, from its being revived, we may infer that it was favourable. It is probable that Beaumont contributed the greater share of this tragi-comedy,[3] which does not hold the meanest rank among the dramatic works of our poets.

In the same year, the tragedy of Cupid's Revenge was first acted, and seems, notwithstanding the utter absurdity of the plot, to have met with a most favourable reception, and to have maintained its popularity during the greater part of the seventeenth century. So capricious was the taste of the public, that The Coxcomb, which was performed at court by the children of the queen's revels in the same year, met with very different success. From the prologue, written for a revival at a subsequent period, we learn, that, though it "was well received and favoured" by "men of worth," it was condemned by the multitude for its length. The expeditious manner of cutting down a play for the second night, which is so often practised in our own days, does not seem to have been known to the managers of that period.

Besides the share which Fletcher had in the

[3] See the introduction to the play, vol. XI. p. 127.

composition of these three plays, he produced, in the same year, the comedy entitled The Captain, in which, on the very strong testimony of the prologue,[4] he appears not to have had recourse to the assistance of Beaumont. Indeed the irregularities of the plot are such, that his not recurring to his judicious associate for aid was very unfortunate. The comedy, which was acted by the king's company, May 20, 1613, appears to have been favourably received.

In the same year, The History of Cardenio was performed at court; and, on its being entered in the Stationers' Books, September 9, 1653, it was ascribed to Fletcher and Shakspeare conjointly. The play was never printed, but the title-page points out the source to have been the novel of Cardenio in Don Quixote, and, from this circumstance, it has been supposed that it was the same afterwards brought on the stage by Theobald, and printed in the year 1727, under the title of The Double Falsehood. Theobald attributed the performance to Shakspeare, but, for a long time, it was considered as a play of his own. Dr Farmer, however, was of opinion, that Theobald was not capable of writing it, and

[4] Vol. IX. p. 131, 133.

that it was the work of Shirley, or, at least, not earlier than his time; while Mr Malone is inclined to attribute the performance to Massinger. The former grounds his opinion on the probability of Shirley's initials having been mistaken for those of Shakspeare, and on the word *aspect* being accented on the first syllable, and not, according to the practice of Shakspeare and his contemporaries, on the second. Theobald, who, no doubt, tampered with the text, may, however, have modernised the pronunciation of the word; and that Shirley could not have been the author of Cardenio is proved by the play having been performed when he was but nineteen years of age, and many years before he commenced writing for the stage. The same objection may be raised against Massinger being concerned in any dramatic work at so early a period; and the testimony of the Stationers' Books does not appear questionable with regard to Fletcher, particularly as he had such frequent recourse to the novels of Cervantes for the plots of his plays. That Shakspeare should have had any concern in the performance is more doubtful; but, if we admit that he assisted Fletcher in The Two Noble Kinsmen, the matter will not be altogether improbable.

We have no data whatever to determine the year in which the last-mentioned drama was produced. In the title-page of the first edition, which did not appear till 1634, it was ascribed to "the memorable worthies of their time, Mr John Fletcher and Mr William Shakspeare;" but the authenticity of this assertion has been disputed by some critics of eminence, amongst whom Mr Steevens deserves to be mentioned with distinction. Other judges of acknowledged discernment, and particularly Dr Farmer, have not hesitated to declare their belief in the co-operation of Shakspeare with Fletcher, and the reasons which have inclined the editor to assent to the latter opinion will be found at the conclusion of that tragedy.[5]

We have already seen that Fletcher, though united in such strict bonds of amity with Beaumont, and though associated with him in his principal dramatic compositions, not only brought several pieces on the stage before the death of Beaumont, without having recourse to his assistance, but that he engaged with other poets of the time in the dramatic partnerships then so common. Mr Malone has printed a curious document from the Henslowe papers preserved in

[5] Vol. XIII. p 151, *et seq.*

Dulwich college, unfortunately without a date, but apparently written, as that commentator conjectures, between the years 1612 and 1615, and, undoubtedly, before the 8th of January, 1615-16, when the death of Henslowe took place, about two months before that of Beaumont. The paper is a curious document of dramatic history, as it proves the poverty of some of the most popular stage-poets; and its insertion in the memoirs of Fletcher is peculiarly necessary, not only as it seems to intimate, that our poet was not in the same indigent circumstances as his associates, but as it proves that he was engaged in poetical partnerships with other authors of the time, even during the lifetime of Beaumont:

" *To our most loving Friend, Mr Philip Hinchlow, Esquire, These.*

" Mr Hinchlow,

" You understand our unfortunate extremities, and I do not thinke you so void of christianitie but that you would throw so much money into the Thames as wee request now of you, rather then endanger so many innocent lives. You know there is x[l]. more, at least, to be receaved of you for the play. We desire you to lend us v[l]. of that, which shall be allowed to you; with-

out which we cannot be bayled, nor I play any more till this be dispatch'd. It will lose you xx[l]. ere the end of the next weeke, besides the hinderance of the next new play. Pray, sir, consider our cases with humanity, and now give us cause to acknowledge you our true freind in time of neede. Wee have entreated Mr Davison to deliver this note, as well to witnesse your love as our promises, and alwayes acknowledgment to be ever,

"Your most thanckfull and loving friends,

"NAT. FIELD."[6]

[6] Nathaniel Field was a player and dramatic poet of considerable reputation. He was one of the children of the chapel, and acted a principal part in Ben Jonson's Cynthia's Revels, first performed in the year 1600, and in the Poetaster, brought on the stage in 1601. He was, after the accession of James I., one of the company, called The Children of her Majesty's Revells; in 1607, he performed the part of Bussy D'Ambois, and, in 1609, one of the characters in The Silent Woman. He prefixed a copy of verses to Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess, acted before 1611; and at the time when he assisted Fletcher, Daborne, and Massinger, in the play above alluded to, he was probably, as Mr Gifford conjectures, about twenty-eight years of age. In 1612, he published his comedy, entitled A Woman is a Weathercock, and, in 1618, another, called Amends for Ladies. In the excellent tragedy of The Fatal Dowry he was associated with Massinger. He died before the year 1641. Mr Reed, in the Biographia Dramatica, and Mr Malone, have doubted whether the player and the dramatic poet were one and the same person; but Mr Chalmers and Mr Gifford have fully proved their identity, chiefly on the testimony of this supplicating letter to Henslowe.

"The money shall be abated out of the money remayns for *the play of Mr Fletcher and ours.*

"ROB. DABORNE."[7]

"I have ever found you a true loving friend to mee, and in so small a suite, it beinge honest, I hope you will not faile us.

"PHILIP MASSINGER."

Indorsed,

"Received by mee, Robert Davison, of Mr Hinchlowe, for the use of Mr Daboerne, Mr Feeld, Mr Messenger, the sum of v[l].

"ROBERT DAVISON."

The play alluded to in the letter, which, as Mr Gifford observes, "it is impossible to read without the most poignant regret at the distress of such men," was not improbably The Jeweller of Amsterdam, or the Hague, which was entered on the Stationers' Books, April 8, 1654, as written by Fletcher, Field, and Massinger, but not

[7] Robert Daborne was one of the minor dramatic poets of James's reign. He took the degree of master of arts, but in which university is not known. He was in holy orders, and had probably a living in or near Waterford, where he preached a sermon, published in 1618. He wrote The Christian turned Turk, a tragedy, printed in 1612, and The Poor Man's Comfort, a tragi-comedy, published in 1655, probably long after his death.

printed.[8] The omission of Daborne's name might easily have happened through negligence, and would probably have been supplied, had the play been actually sent to the press.

Beaumont, as well as his associate, if we may believe the evidence of the books of the Stationers' Company, produced a dramatic performance unassisted by his friend. The History of Mador, King of Great Britain, by Francis Beaumont, was entered on the books of that company, June 29, 1660, together with A Right Woman, a comedy, and The Faithful Friends, both attributed to our poets conjointly. The two former are to all appearance irretrievably lost; the latter is now printed from an original manuscript for the first time.

Besides the dramatic productions which have been enumerated above, and the date of which is, in some measure, ascertained, there are several others which were written previous to the death of Beaumont. One of the earliest of these seems to have been The Scornful Lady, probably produced soon after 1609, when the Cleves wars, mentioned in one of the scenes, broke

[8] This play is inadvertently omitted in Mr Gifford's list of Massinger's plays.

out. This comedy is, in the title-page, said to have been acted with great applause; and, from the number of editions published before the Restoration, its popularity seems to have been of long continuance. Another comedy, which our poets wrote in conjunction, is The Little French Lawyer, in which they displayed their powers to great advantage, Beaumont very successfully following the footsteps of Ben Jonson in the humorous part of La-Writ, and Fletcher supplying the alternately serious and sprightly plot of Dinant, Cleremont, and Lamira, borrowing, as usual, from the Italian and Spanish novelists. The comedy of Wit at several Weapons was also produced by our united poets; and The Custom of the Country, a drama, in which an interesting plot and some scenes which display the highest talents, are debased by the most disgusting ribaldry, is also ascribed to both poets in the two prologues, though, from the evidence of the versification, we may ascribe by far the greatest portion to Fletcher. The excellent comedy of Wit without Money may likewise, though with some hesitation, be attributed to Beaumont and Fletcher; for, though we have no direct evidence excepting the title-page, which mentions both their names, the hand of the former seems to

be visible in the judicious regularity of the plot, and in the almost total absence of serious scenes, which Fletcher, in the comedies he furnished for the stage after the demise of Beaumont, introduces very liberally. The versification, however, on the principles which will be mentioned in the sequel of this introduction, intimates that the execution was principally Fletcher's. From the testimony of several poets who have eulogised our authors, it appears, that, in many instances, one of them furnished the plot, while the other raised the fabric on his superstructure, and this may have been the case in the last-mentioned comedy, as well as in King and No King and The Custom of the Country.

The dramas which we have hitherto attributed to both poets, on such evidence as we must necessarily rest contented with, not being in possession of better, are chiefly comedies. Among the tragedies and tragi-comedies, there are three which may be ascribed to Beaumont and Fletcher conjointly with considerable probability,— Bonduca, The Knight of Malta, and The Laws of Candy. The two former were undoubtedly represented previous to March 1618-9, as the celebrated tragedian Burbage, who performed in both, died at that period; and internal evi-

dence proves that all the three were composed by more than one author.[9]

The strict intimacy in which our poets had lived for so many years was interrupted by the sudden death of Beaumont, which took place early in March 1615-6, before he had fully attained his thirtieth year. He was buried on the ninth of that month, without any inscription, in Westminster cathedral, at the entrance of St Benedict's chapel, near the Earl of Middlesex's monument. He exhibited one of the most brilliant, and, at the same time, the most solid instances of early genius. Besides his juvenile poem, he had, in about eight years, from the first appearance of Philaster, which is the first play in which he is known with certainty to have had any concern, to his death, furnished in the whole, or in part, about twenty dramatic performances for the theatres, in which he had displayed talents of a very superior quality, and of great variety. But the consideration of his merit as a dramatic writer will be more in place when we come to a general criticism on the works of our united authors, from which it will appear, though Fletcher, perhaps, exceeded his

[9] See the introductions to those plays, vol. VI. p. 3, vol. VIII. p. 257, and vol. III. p. 3.

associate in the richness of fancy, and the delineation of some peculiar descriptions of character, that Beaumont joined great eloquence of language, power of description, and sublimity of diction, to a strong and manly humour, and a powerful and indignant personification of the vices and follies of the time.

The connection between our poets seems to have been of the most amiable nature; indeed, as the writer of their article in the Historical Dictionary has already observed, nothing can be imagined more delightful than this union of genius, and this entire renunciation of individual fame. The gradual structure of the plots, perhaps first suggested in familiar conversation, and matured in subsequent meetings, the distribution of the different parts to be executed by each, and the open and ingenuous submission of their several scenes to the criticism and scrutiny of each other, indicate a degree of literary intimacy, which has, probably, never before, or since, endured for so long a period. We are informed by Aubrey, that "they lived together on the Bankside, not far from the play-house, both bachelors; had one bench in the house between them, which they did so admire; the same clothes, cloak, &c. between them."

Beaumont, however, did not die a bachelor: He married, in what year has not been ascertained, Ursula, daughter and coheir of Henry Isley of Sundridge, in Kent, by whom he left two daughters. One of these, Frances, reached a very advanced age, as she was living in 1700, at which time she enjoyed a pension of one hundred pounds a year from the Duke of Ormond, having lived in his family as a domestic for some years. She is said to have been in possession of several poems of her father's, which were lost during her voyage from Ireland to England.

Beaumont appears to have enjoyed the friendship of Ben Jonson in a very distinguished degree.[1] Indeed his genius was, in some measure,

[1] The superlative merits of Ben Jonson, in the peculiar walk of comedy, to which he principally confined himself, and the occasional flashes of a higher poetical genius which are to be met with in his works, must be readily acknowledged by every reader who has the faculty of distinguishing the various excellencies of dramatic composition. His humour is harsh and severe, but it is supereminently excellent, and no poet has ever exceeded him in delineating the absurd affectations of folly, or the artful stratagems of impostors, profiting by the credulity of weak minds. This acknowledgment of old Ben's excellencies becomes requisite from every one who ventures to retain a belief in the failings of that great poet, the existence of which Mr Octavius Gilchrist, with a laudable anxiety for his fame, has laboured to disprove. It seems that all who place any degree

assimilated to that of Jonson, and particularly his humour. The Mermaid tavern, in Cornhill, seems to have been the resort of some of the principal wits of the time, chiefly those of the Jonsonian school; and Beaumont gives us the following fascinating account of their meetings, in his poetical epistle to Ben Jonson:

———" What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whom they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life; then when there hath been thrown
Wit able enough to justify the town
For three days past; wit that might warrant be
For the whole city to talk foolishly
Till that were cancelled; and when that was gone
We left an air behind us, which alone

of faith in the testimony of Drummond and Howel, respecting Jonson's self-sufficiency and harsh censure of his contemporaries, and who are not satisfied with the manner in which that gentleman has explained away every passage in old literature, which seems to indicate an enmity, or even coolness, between him and Shakspeare at one part of their lives, (and particularly that very strong passage in The Return from Parnassus,) are set down as despisers of his genius, who find nothing to admire in his works. If we were to regulate our poetical taste according to this standard, and to condemn every production whose author may be charged with some defect, or failing, in the moral constitution of his mind, how many works of genius would be removed from our admiration!

Was able to make the two next companies
Right witty; though but downright fools, mere wise.

Seward, in quoting this passage in his preface, exclaims, with considerable eloquence, and certainly with a degree of enthusiasm which is easily communicated to every admirer of our ancient dramatists, "Now, reader, when thou art fired with rage, or melted into pity, by their tragic scenes, charmed with the genteel elegance, or bursting into laughter at their comic humour, canst thou not drop the intervening ages, steal into Jonson, Beaumont, and Fletcher's club-room, at the Mermaid, on a night when Shakspeare, Donne, and others, visited them, and there join in society with as great wits as ever this nation, or perhaps ever Greece or Rome, could at one time boast, where, animated each by the other's presence, they even excelled themselves?" Undoubtedly such an assemblage of wits cannot be paralleled by any succeeding age in this country; nor can the meetings at Will's and Button's in Queen Anne's time, infuriated by party, bear any comparison to the social intercourse at the Mermaid and the Devil taverns in the reign of King James.

The particular intimacy which took place be-

tween Beaumont and Ben Jonson seems to have commenced at a very early period. The former addressed a most judicious copy of verses to his friend on his comedy of The Fox, at the early age of nineteen; and the encomiums which he bestowed at subsequent periods of his life on The Silent Woman and on Catiline, as well as the poetical epistle quoted above, indicate the warmest and most genuine attachment to the great dramatic satirist of the manners of his age, which was returned with equal ardour by the latter, as is strongly evinced by the short copy of verses beginning,

> "How I do love thee, Beaumont, and thy muse,
> That unto me dost such religion use!"

Ben Jonson seems to have had the highest veneration for the genius of his youthful friend; and the manner in which he acknowledges the value he set upon his approbation, proves that he considered it worth more than the most fulsome eulogies of his flatterers and his imitators.

When death had deprived Fletcher of his bosom-friend, and the companion and assistant of his poetical studies, he had an opportunity of proving to the world that his widowed genius was sufficient for the production of numerous drama-

tic pieces, some of them rising to the highest degree of excellence, and none sinking beneath mediocrity. In the space of ten years, intervening between the death of Beaumont and his own, he furnished for the stage above thirty plays, some of them in conjunction with other dramatic poets of the time, but the greater part proceeding from his unassisted muse. In the following verses of Sir Aston Cockayne, the great friend and patron of the dramatic poets of his age, addressed to Humphrey Moseley the bookseller, who, in 1647, published a collection of those plays of our poets, which, till then, had remained unedited, he not only asserts that Fletcher was the sole author of the greater number, but informs us who was his associate in the composition of others:

"In the large book of plays you late did print
In Beaumont and in Fletcher's name, why in't
Did you not justice give to each his due?
For Beaumont of those many writ but few:
And Massinger in other few; the main
Being sweet issues of sweet Fletcher's brain.
But how came I, you ask, so much to know?
Fletcher's chief bosom-friend informed me so."

Sir Aston asserts Massinger's share in some of these plays in another place of his collection of

doggrel rhymes, which are more valuable on account of the persons to whom they are addressed, and the literary information they convey, than for any passages of poetical merit, which would be searched for in vain. The following is "an epitaph on Mr John Fletcher and Mr Philip Massinger, who lie both buried in one grave in St Mary Overy's church, in Southwark:"

"In the same grave was Fletcher buried, here
Lies the stage-poet, Philip Massinger;
Plays they did write together, were great friends,
And now one grave includes them in their ends.
To whom on earth nothing could part, beneath
Here in their fame they lie, in spite of death."

The utter carelessness for literary history, which prevailed at the time, can alone excuse the publisher of the first folio collection for not pointing out the plays which Fletcher wrote without the assistance of Beaumont.[a] That he could have done so appears evident from his preface, where he informs us that it was his

[a] Sir Aston Cockayne is very severe upon this negligence, in his verses addressed to Mr Charles Cotton:

——"What a foul
And inexcusable fault it is, (that whole
Volume of plays being almost every one
After the death of Beaumont writ,) that none
Would certify them so much!"

first intention to have printed the plays of Fletcher by themselves, "because single and alone he would make a just volume." We have, however, equal reason to complain of Sir Aston Cockayne for not having supplied the information which he accuses the publisher of having failed to impart to the reader.

It is probable, as Mr Gifford observes, that the plays, in which Fletcher had recourse to the assistance of Massinger, were produced at an early period of the dramatic career of the latter, and, therefore, soon after the death of Beaumont. Massinger's fame is sufficiently established by the plays which are known to have been his productions, but it is to be lamented that he should be deprived of the reputation he would derive from posterity by his share in the dramas which he wrote in partnership with Fletcher being ascertained. But here we are entirely in the dark; and even conjecture can only point out two plays which, from correlative circumstances, appear to have been of the number of those which are alluded to by Sir Aston Cockayne. The tragedy of The False One is ascribed in the prologue and epilogue to more than one author, and, from the absence of the

great tragedian Burbadge's name in the list of the principal actors, we may, with some probability, conclude, that it was brought on the stage after his death, which took place in March, 1618-9.[3] From these circumstances, combined with the evidence of the versification and the strength of plot peculiar to Massinger, it does not appear rash to suppose that he was concerned with Fletcher in the composition of that tragedy. The second play which the editor is inclined to ascribe to these two illustrious poets is Love's Pilgrimage, which, in the prologue, is directly attributed to more than one author, and there is no circumstance from which we might infer that the assistant of Fletcher was Beaumont, whose style of versification is not to be traced in this drama; and the same objection cannot be started against Massinger's having had a share in the composition, as the general cast of his metre resembles Fletcher's much more than that of Beaumont does. Besides, the plot being founded on one of the Exemplary

[3] From the list of the actors who performed the characters in Webster's Duchess of Malfy, it appears that Taylor took the parts of Burbadge after the death of the latter, as Robinson took those of Cundale, and Benfield those of Ostler.

Novels of Cervantes, which were first published in 1613, seems to strengthen the supposition that Love's Pilgrimage was written after the death of Beaumont, as the space of two years is almost too short for the circulation of a Spanish work in London at that period. It has been generally supposed that this play was left imperfect by Fletcher at his death, and finished by Shirley, on the evidence of the following entry in Sir Henry Herbert's manuscript: "Received of Blagrove, from the King's company, for the renewing of Love's Pilgrimage, the 16th of September, 1635, £1 : 0 : 0." Shirley's name is not mentioned in this memorandum, and the only alteration of the play consisted, to all appearance, in the insertion of a scene from Ben Jonson's unsuccessful comedy of The New Inn, which was licensed for the stage on the 19th of January, 1628-9, several years after the death of Fletcher. Such an insertion, which undoubtedly was executed, as indeed is intimated by Sir Henry, for a renewal, or revival, of a comedy which had been represented on the stage many years before, could easily have been performed by the players, without the expence of having recourse to the assistance of a professional dra-

matic author like Shirley. These arguments do not amount to a positive proof of Love's Pilgrimage being one of the plays mentioned by Sir Aston Cockayne as the joint productions of Fletcher and Massinger, but, in the absence of perfectly conclusive evidence, they are certainly of considerable weight, and the play is every way worthy of these two eminent poets.

The tragedy of Rollo, or the Bloody Brother, has generally been ascribed to Fletcher alone, on the authority of the title-page of one of the quartos. But internal evidence so strongly points out that he must have had a coadjutor, that we need not hesitate to ascribe the third and fourth acts, which are totally different from the style of Fletcher, and bear almost as little resemblance to that of Beaumont, to one of the second or third rate dramatists of the time. The play was certainly written before 1621, but no evidence can warrant us in fixing the exact date. It was acted by the king's servants, apparently with great applause, and, after the Restoration, enjoyed a share of popularity hardly warranted by its real merit.

It was probably not long after the death of Beaumont that Fletcher joined with Ben Jon-

son and Middleton in the composition of The Widow, a comedy, which was not printed till the year 1652. From the mention of the "hateful fashion" of yellow bands, which were the invention of Mrs Turner, and which became odious after her execution for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury in 1615, it is probable that the comedy was produced within a few years of that event, particularly as we have evidence of the fashion having again become as prevalent as ever in the year 1621.[4] Middleton, who was, on this occasion, assisted by two of his most illustrious contemporaries, was a dramatic author of long standing, and of no mean powers. Among the second-rate dramatists of the time, he may challenge equality with Heywood, Deckar, Rowley, and some others, and the very circumstance of his writing in combination with Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Massinger, and Ford, proves that he was held in considerable estimation in his day. His plays, which deserve to be collected, not only on account of their intrinsic value, but for the faithful delineations of the manners of the time conveyed in them, are very

[4] See a note on this play, act v. scene i. vol. XIV.

numerous. He is supposed to have died soon after the year 1626.

In enumerating the plays which Fletcher brought on the stage after the death of Beaumont, we must principally content ourselves with conjecture, till we reach the year 1621, when the office books of Sir Henry Herbert; the master of the revels, furnish us with more certain evidence to determine their dates. The Queen of Corinth, a tragi-comedy of very considerable merit, but exhibiting strange aberrations of judgment, was probably written soon after 16.6, a pamphlet of the famous half-witted Tom Coryate, published in that year, being alluded to in the course of that play.

In 1618, The Loyal Subject[6] was licensed by Sir George Buck, as we learn from the manuscripts of his successor, Sir Henry Herbert; and, on the same authority, we are informed that at its revival, in 1633, it was highly approved of by King Charles I., perhaps from its containing a striking exemplification of the blind obedience he required from his subjects, and of

[6] There is a considerable resemblance between The Loyal Subject and a comedy of Julian de Castro's, a Spanish poet of the seventeenth century, entitled, *Mas vale tarde que nunca.*

the right of princes *de jure divino*, then a doctrine very fashionable at court.

In the same, or one of the years immediately preceding, Fletcher produced The Mad Lover, in which Burbadge acted a principal part, probably that of Memnon, which gives title to the play. The extravagance of the plot, and the half-serious, half-humorous character just mentioned, did not prevent the piece from attaining a great share of popularity. Sir Aston Cockayne wrote a long copy of verses in its commendation, which is chiefly valuable because it proves Fletcher to have been the sole author.

Another play, which was produced before the death of Burbadge, and which, from internal evidence, particularly from the versification, which is uniform throughout, and bears every mark of Fletcher's peculiarities, I am inclined to ascribe to that poet, soon after the demise of his friend, is Valentinian, a tragedy of striking merit, but unfortunately defaced by an injudicious extension of the plot after the death of the principal character.[7]

[7] In the introductory remarks on Valentinian, the editor has noticed the disgust with which the reader is inspired on finding that Maximus had planned the dishonour of his spouse, and the death of his friend, to effectuate his ambitious designs. It

The tragedy of The Double Marriage, a performance exhibiting great power of imagination, but unfortunately somewhat affected by that propensity towards strained and improbable incidents, which was one of the chief failings of Fletcher, seems to have been represented after the death of Burbadge, whose name does not appear in the list of the principal performers. We have no other evidence to ascribe the play to Fletcher alone, but that of the versification, which however is very strong, as it exhibits all his peculiarities. On the same ground, I should be inclined to attribute The Humorous Lieutenant to Fletcher, though the principal character is so much in Ben Jonson's style, that we might be led to ascribe a portion of the play to Beaumont, his imitator, if we did not know, on positive evidence, that Fletcher sometimes left his usual path of delineating natural characters, and followed the artificial style of Jonson. Of this we have already had an undoubted instance in The Mad Lo-

has since been suggested by a friend, perhaps justly, that Maximus was not guilty of those crimes, but that he only pretended to have conspired against his wife and Aecius to obtain the hand of Eudoxia. This, however, by no means exculpates Maximus; and, if we adopt this supposition, it only degrades him from detestation to contempt.

ver. The comedy of The Humorous Lieutenant not only met with a favourable reception on its original appearance, but, after the Restoration, obtained such popularity, that it was selected for the first opening of the theatre in Drury-lane, April 8, 1663, and had an uninterrupted run of twelve nights,—a very unusual circumstance at the time.

Another comedy, chiefly founded on the school of Jonson, and to all appearance produced by Fletcher singly, is Nice Valour, or the Passionate Madman. It displays a very rich fund of humour and poetical description; but the abstract and artificial nature of the characters prevented its enjoying a long continuation of popularity. It should not be forgotten, that a song in this play furnished the outline of Milton's Il Penseroso.[8]

The pleasing drama, entitled Women Pleased, which is remarkable for an extremely artificial, but, at the same time, a very well-connected

[8] Milton may be fairly charged with some degree of ingratitude to Fletcher, for omitting to mention him, together with Jonson and Shakspeare, in L'Allegro, as he was not only indebted to him for more than the hint of Il Penseroso, to which that poem was intended as a counterpart, but as he very liberally borrowed from Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess in his Comus.

combination of many novels into one plot, may be ascribed to Fletcher, for want of external proofs, on internal evidence. The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed, was certainly his production, as it is directly attributed to him by the master of the revels, on its revival, when it produced a curious altercation between that officer and the players.[9] In this composition Fletcher intended to produce a counterpart to Shakspeare's Taming of the Shrew; but, notwithstanding his comedy contains a very considerable portion of humour and animated dialogue, it is by no means one of the happiest efforts of his genius.

Two of Fletcher's most excellent comedies, The Chances and Monsieur Thomas, were brought on the stage probably before the year 1621, but we are utterly unable to decide upon the precise year in which they appeared. The former is generally allowed to be one of the liveliest and most entertaining comedies in the language, and has had the good fortune to survive the popularity of almost all the dramas in these volumes, as it still keeps possession of the stage, after having undergone some judicious alterations, suitable to the progressive change of manners, from

[9] See vol. V. p. 253.

the pens of the Duke of Buckingham and Mr Garrick. Monsieur Thomas was published fourteen years after the death of Fletcher, by the dramatic poet, Richard Brome, with a dedication to Charles Cotton the elder, in which he informs us, that it was his "fortune to be made the unworthy preserver of it." From the dedication, as well as from a copy of verses prefixed by the editor,[1] it does not seem to have met with the most flattering reception from the audience.

From the manuscript of Sir Henry Herbert, master of the revels, we are enabled to enumerate the plays which Fletcher produced in the five last years of his life, according to the time they were represented on the stage. His facility of composition will appear truly wonderful, if we consider, that, in the short space of five years, he produced no less than sixteen perfect plays, besides those which appear to have been left unfinished at his death.

Mr Malone observes, that "it appears from Sir Henry Herbert's manuscript that the new plays which Fletcher had brought out in the course of the year were generally presented at court at Christmas." On this very conclusive

[1] Vol. VI. p. 418, 419.

evidence we may decide, that he produced three plays in the year 1621, *viz.* The Island Princess,* The Pilgrim, and The Wild-Goose Chase. The latter, at the time when Moseley collected the unpublished plays of our poets, was not to be found, and, having been lent to a person of quality by the actors, was supposed to be irrecoverably lost. It was, however, as the title-page of the folio edition, printed in 1652, informs us, "retrieved for the public delight of all the ingenious, and private benefit of John Lowin and Joseph Taylor, servants to his late majesty, by a Person of Honour." The dedication of these players, "To the honoured Few, Lovers of Dramatic Poesy," cannot be read without the most lively regret. Most of their colleagues, after the destruction of the stage, as Wright informs us, "went into the king's service, and, like good men and true, served their old master, though in a different, yet more honourable capacity." Lowin and Taylor, however, as well as Pollard, were superannuated, and the first kept an inn, the Three Pigeons, at Brentford, where he died

* There is a Spanish play upon the same subject, by Melchor Fernandez de Leon, entitled *La Conquista de las Maluccas.* Some part of the plot, which is taken from history, is similar to that of The Island Princess, but there the resemblance ceases.

at a very advanced age. The Wild-Goose Chase is, in the title-page, said to have been acted with considerable applause at the Blackfriars; and, in the dedication, we are informed that Fletcher, "as well as the thronged theatre, (in despight of his innate modesty,) applauded this rare issue of his brain." Five copies of recommendatory verses were prefixed to the publication.[3] The comedy is certainly one of the most lively dramas of the age, exhibiting few of the defects which may, in too many instances, be charged upon Fletcher's performances.

In the year 1622, our poet supplied the theatrical public with a large portion of entertainment. From the manuscripts of Sir Henry Herbert, it appears that he furnished four plays for the stage. On the 14th of May, The Prophetess was presented, a drama which exhibits great eloquence of language, but unfortunately the poet introduced supernatural agency, and, like all his contemporaries, with the sole exception of Shakspeare, to whose genius the delineation of the world of spirits was almost exclusively allotted, he failed egregiously. On the 22d of June, The

[3] These, as well as the very curious dedication, will be found restored in this edition, having been omitted by all the modern editors.

Sea Voyage was first acted at the Globe theatre. It is evidently an imitation and counterpart to Shakspeare's Tempest, and the parallel which the reader is unavoidably led to draw between these two plays, is very disadvantageous to that of Fletcher, notwithstanding the sprightly dialogue which it contains, and the very considerable interest of the plot. On the 24th of October, Fletcher furnished The Spanish Curate for the private theatre at the Blackfriars. There are few comedies extant in the language which possess such sterling merit, and such a fund of gay and lively humour. During the seventeenth century it was frequently acted, but the present almost total neglect of all our ancient dramatists but Shakspeare has driven this play off the stage for above sixty years. About the middle of the eighteenth century, it was revived for a London audience, and damned: but the memory of Fletcher is not tarnished by this condemnation of a modern pit; for, about the same time, The Little French Lawyer and The Scornful Lady of our poets, together with The Silent Woman, perhaps the most perfect of Ben Jonson's comedies, suffered the same sentence from the same tribunal.[4]

[4] Colman's preface to Philaster.

During Christmas, the same year, Fletcher's comedy, entitled The Beggars' Bush, was performed at court, from which circumstance we may conclude that it was originally produced during the course of that year.

Another play, which Fletcher seems to have brought forward in this, or the ensuing year, is the comedy of Love's Cure, or the Martial Maid. In the second act, there is an allusion to the Muscovite ambassadors at the court of King James, who were in London in 1617, and again in 1622. From the expression, "that lay here lieger in the last great frost," we may conclude, that the poet refers to the winter of 1622, which was so severe, that the Russian ambassadors did not stir from their house till June, as we are informed by Sir John Finett in his Philoxenis.

Fletcher's muse was equally prolific in 1623 as in the preceding year. On the 29th of August, The Maid of the Mill was produced at the Globe. Our poet was assisted in the composition of this comedy by Rowley, an actor and an inferior playwright of that time, who, besides eight or nine plays of his own writing, was associated in the composition of about ten others, with Massinger, Middleton, Ford, Webster, Heywood, &c. and seems to have enjoyed the com-

pany and friendship of most of the contemporary dramatists. He performed one of the characters in The Maid in the Mill, which appears to have met with a most favourable reception, having been acted no less than three times at court, which was not a usual circumstance at that time.

On the 17th of October, 1623, Sir Henry Herbert made the following entry in his manuscript:[5] "For the king's company, an old play, called More Dissemblers besides Women [by Middleton]: allowed by Sir George Bucke, and being free from alterations, was allowed by me, for a new play, called The Devil of Dowgate, or Usury put to Use. Written by Fletcher." This entry is rather confused; but it should seem that Sir Henry refused to grant his license for the performance of Fletcher's play, and that he licensed an old comedy of Middleton's to be acted in its stead. This circumstance may, perhaps, have occasioned the loss of this performance. It is possible, however, that The Night-Walker, or the Little Thief, which was brought on the stage in 1633, "corrected by Shirley," may have been an alteration of this comedy. The circumstance of the latter containing the cha-

[5] Chalmers's Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare Papers, 1799. 8. p. 215.

racter of an old city usurer, who is frightened by some tricks of pretended *diablerie*, renders such a supposition not altogether improbable.

On the 16th of December, in the same year, the master of the revels licensed the Wandering Lovers, by Fletcher, for the theatre in the Blackfriars, which appears to be irretrievably lost. A comedy, entitled The Wandering Lovers, or the Painter, was entered on the Stationers' Books, September 9, 1653, as the composition of Massinger, and was extant among those which were so unfortunately destroyed by Mr Warburton's servant. As it does not seem likely that Fletcher and Massinger, who were on the most intimate terms, and occasionally wrote in concert, should give the same title to two different plays, we may suppose that the entries in Sir Henry Herbert's manuscript, and in the Stationers' Registers, refer to one and the same performance, most likely written by these poets in conjunction.

On the 27th of May, 1624, Fletcher's tragicomedy, entitled A Wife for a Month, was brought out by the king's servants; a drama replete with the most poetical passages, and some of the characters of which are drawn with consummate art; but, unfortunately, the subject of

the plot is too extravagant to render the success of any revival dubious. On the 19th of October, the same year, the comedy of Rule a Wife and have a Wife was brought on the stage. The excellencies of this admirable play are such, that even the vitiated taste of the audiences of our own days finds the entertainment palatable.

No other dramatic performances of Fletcher were brought on the stage during his lifetime, but he left several which were represented after his death. On the 22d of January, 1625-6, The Fair Maid of the Inn was acted at Blackfriars, and, on the third of February, The Noble Gentleman was produced at the same theatre. The first of these plays bears every mark of having received the finishing hand of the poet, and is, in many respects, a very valuable performance; but the latter has all the appearance of an unfinished work, and it is not improbable that it was fitted for the stage by one of Fletcher's friends, perhaps Shirley.

The Elder Brother,[6] one of the most regular

[6] It is singular that one of Calderon's comedies, entitled *De una causa dos efectos*, bears a most striking resemblance to The Elder Brother. Fletcher and Calderon were contemporaries; but it is not to be supposed that either of them could have read the production of the other, and borrowed the hint.

and highly finished works of Fletcher, appears also to have been a posthumous production, as the prologue speaks in the following terms of the poet:

——"Living, he did gain
Your good opinions; but, *now dead*, commends
This *orphan* to the care of noble friends:
And may it raise in you content and mirth,
And be received for a legitimate birth."

The romantic tragedy of The Lovers' Progress appears from the prologue to have been left imperfect at the death of Fletcher. The defective parts were supplied by one of his friends, either Shirley, or, as I suspect from internal evidence, Massinger.[7]

Fletcher died in August 1625, in his forty-ninth year, and, on the 19th of that month, he was buried, without any memorial, in St Mary Overy's church, in Southwark. He was returning to the country, and waiting for the tailor to bring him home a new suit of clothes, when he was seized by the plague, then prevalent in the metropolis, and suddenly carried off. For this information we are indebted to Aubrey,[8] who

[7] See the introductory remarks on that play, vol. XIII.

[8] Natural History and Antiquities of Surrey, 1719. 8, vol. V. p. 210.

heard this anecdote in 1670, from the same tailor, at that time clerk of that parish, and upwards of eighty years of age. Of the domestic circumstances of our poet's life we are utterly ignorant. It is not even known whether he was ever married or not; but, as he was a bachelor about the time when he lived with Beaumont on the Bankside, at which period he was turned of thirty, it is not improbable that he remained in the same condition to the end of his days.[9]

During his lifetime he was very generally respected, and his memory seems to have been almost idolized by his friends, among whom, Shakspeare, Jonson, Massinger, and Shirley, deserve peculiar mention. With Massinger he appears to have lived in particular intimacy, as may be gathered from Sir Aston Cockayne's epitaph inserted above.

As we are not in possession of any anecdotes of Fletcher's life and manners, we must have recourse to the very scanty notices which are scattered in a few places of his writings, to the occa-

[9] It has not been ascertained whether our poet was related to R. Fletcher, the translator of Martial, and a poet of some merit, which is most conspicuous in some of the humorous original pieces which he annexed to his translations.

sional hints in the prologues and epilogues to his plays, and to the very suspicious testimonies of his eulogists, who generally praised without discrimination, and seldom with any knowledge of his character. Being engaged, probably by the bookseller, to contribute their mite to the "second library of praise," as the collection of the commendatory verses is facetiously called by Alexander Brome, in allusion to the poems prefixed by the wits of the time to Tom Coryate's Crudities, they did their devoirs by lavishing indiscriminate praises on their favourite poet, without furnishing much matter for a delineation of his character. It must, however, be acknowledged, that we find amongst these encomiasts the names of the most celebrated poets who survived him. With a few exceptions, they were all known to the public as authors, and, as furnishing testimonies of esteem and friendship, their verses are certainly deserving of a place in a complete edition of the poets.

The sprightliness of Fletcher's conversation, and the ease and gaiety of his repartee, may be easily collected from his uncommon facility in pourtraying gentlemen of high rank and honour, and of easy, genteel deportment. Several of the commendatory poets speak in rapturous

terms of his colloquial powers; and the prologue written for a revival of his comedy of The Chances may be quoted, as proving the general reputation which he held for this talent immediately after his demise:

> "My promise will find credit with the most,
> When they know ingenious Fletcher made it, he
> Being in himself a perfect comedy:
> And some sit here, I doubt not, dare aver
> Living he made that house a theatre
> Which he pleased to frequent."—

As Fletcher and Beaumont were superior to almost all the dramatic poets of the time in point of extraction, so they seem to have been exempted from the great degree of indigence under which most of them laboured. Beaumont was of a still more illustrious family than his friend; his elder brother was raised to the dignity of a baronet, and there is every reason to suppose that he enjoyed competence, if not affluence, during the too brief period of his life. Fletcher's family had been raised by their own exertions, but it is more than probable that he was not left destitute by his father. His uncle, Dr Giles Fletcher, by his diplomatic talents, obtained considerable influence; and his two sons, Giles and Phineas, seem to have enjoyed com-

petent ecclesiastical preferments. That our poet was not reduced to the same painful expedients as some of his fellow-poets, appears from his not joining with Massinger, Field, and Daborne, in the petition to Henslowe, printed on a former page; and in the verses to Sir William Skipwith,[1] prefixed to The Faithful Shepherdess, he expressly declares that the publication was not

—"to make it serve to feed
At my need."

In their political principles both poets were evidently royalists; and it must not be laid to their charge, that they frequently asserted and inculcated the divine right and inviolability of kings, as that was the almost universal doctrine of the times, particularly of those persons who were attached to the theatres.[2] This servility is, however, less apparent in those plays which Fletcher composed after the death of Beau-

[1] An epitaph upon this gentleman occurs in the poems of Sir John Beaumont, in which he is described as possessing the most amiable qualities of person and of mind.

[2] A strong proof of this is the fact of all the king's players professing themselves royalists, and those who were not superannuated actually engaging in the cause, with the single exception of Swanston, who became a presbyterian tradesman.

mont,[3] than in their joint productions; and in his tragedy of The Double Marriage, he boldly exemplified the punishment due to a monarch whose tyranny has become insupportable, and the rights of an oppressed people, in direct opposition to the doctrines so strongly inculcated in The Maid's Tragedy, and some others of the early pieces to which he contributed.

Of the religious opinions of Beaumont we have no evidence besides occasional effusions put into the mouths of the characters of his dramas; but, as the poems of his elder brother abound with piety, a favourable reflection is cast upon the tenets of our poet. Fletcher has left us a valuable proof of his religious and moral creed in his verses upon An Honest Man's Fortune,[4] in which he combats the absurdities of astrology, and the fanatical doctrines of predestination and worthlessness of good works, with the zeal of a divine, and the indignation of a satirist. His trust in a superior providence, and his conviction that rectitude of principles and actions

[3] Beaumont's family seems to have been particularly engaged in the interests of the Duke of Buckingham. In the poems of his brother, Sir John, there are no less than ten poems addressed to that favourite, one on the death of his son, and one to his elder brother, Viscount Purbeck.

[4] See vol. XI. p. 253.

cannot fail to meet with their due reward, he expresses in the following nervous and manly lines:

"He is my star, in him all truth I find,
All influence, all fate! and when my mind
Is furnished with his fullness, my poor story
Shall out-live all their age, and all their glory!
The hand of danger cannot fall amiss,
When I know what, and in whose power it is:
Nor want, the curse of man, shall make me groan;
A holy hermit is a mind alone.
Doth not experience teach us, all we can,
To work ourselves into a glorious man? - - - -
Affliction, when I know it is but this,
A deep allay, whereby man tougher is
To bear the hammer, and, the deeper still,
We still arise more image of his will;
Sickness, an humorous cloud 'twixt us and light,
And death at longest, but another night!
Man is his own star, and that soul that can
Be honest, is the only perfect man."

Fletcher seizes almost every opportunity which presents itself to him, in the course of his plays, to satirise the fanatics of the day. He may, perhaps, be accused of being too severe upon them in some instances, and of being sometimes betrayed into gross licentiousness, and, perhaps, into occasional prophaneness, when he wishes to raise the laugh against them; but it must be recollected that the dramatic poets of the time, as well as the players, were loaded with the

grossest abuse, and vilified with the most scandalous epithets by the puritans, [illegible] in their writings as from their pulpits and tubs. They were declared the arch-limbs of Beelzebub, the instruments of the devil, the advocates of all manner of iniquity, and the direct enemies of religion, having enlisted under the banners of Antichrist. They, as well as the spectators who attended the representation of their productions, in their opinion, renounced their inheritance of the kingdom of Heaven, unless, like Stephen Gosson, and one or two other dramatists, they abjured the unprofitable and wicked art of play-making, and joined the cry of eternal perdition against their former fellow-poets. Instances of sudden and terrible judgments against play-wrights and frequenters of plays, were studiously searched for among the fathers, and blazoned about with preposterous triumph. In short, the innocent amusements of the people, such as plays, country-festivities, morris-dancing, and masquings, were attacked much more violently than their grossest vices. No wonder, then, that the dramatic writers retaliated upon the fanatics; but, instead of having recourse to abuse,

they employed the surer and more biting weapons of [illegible]nd ridicule.[6]

In considering the general merit and the poetical character of the works of Beaumont and Fletcher, the state of dramatic composition at the time must always be kept in view. Regularity and unity of design were not considered of equal importance among the writers and critics of London in those days as they were at Athens or Rome. The question of the value of these rules, and of the expediency of the poets of all countries subscribing to their authority, may be fairly set aside; and, indeed, the numerous and able defenders of Shakspeare may be referred

[6] Sometimes the puritans seem to have made successful applications to the master of the revels for the removal of such passages, which, in spite of their pretended indifference of worldly abuse, and readiness to undergo persecution and martyrdom for the cause, touched them too nearly.—See the introduction to The Woman's Prize, vol. V. p. 251.

The avowed hostility of the fanatics to the stage did not cease with the Restoration; and the persecution which the author of Douglas underwent in the middle of the enlightened eighteenth century, will for ever stamp disgrace on his persecutors. There is nothing more disgusting in the tirades of Prynne, Gosson, Stubbs, and Hall, than in the pamphlets published against the tragedy of Douglas. Fortunately, the stage has nothing to fear from the attacks of the fanatics of our own days. They are not less violent and abusive, but they are harmless and ineffective.

to as a defence of all his contemporaries. The powerful scenes of that poet, supported by some which are little inferior in the compositions of Jonson, Massinger, and our poets, are sufficient authority for the establishment of a new dramatic school less perfect than that of the ancients, which is still followed by the poets of France and Italy, but founded more immediately on nature, better calculated for the display of striking events, and indulging to the imagination more extended limits.[7] If these premises are granted, (and, without granting them, their plays, together with those of almost all their illustrious contemporaries, must be condemned,) we may assert, that the general conception of our poets' plots is most happily imagined, though too

[7] Butler, in his verses "Upon Critics who judge of Modern Plays precisely by the rules of the Ancients," which were occasioned by Rymer's attacking three of our authors' plays, after having traced the genealogy of these critics from Speroni, and pointed out the thefts they committed among the works of their predecessors, says that they there found matter—

"Enough to furnish all the lewd impeachers
Of witty Beaumont's poetry and Fletcher's;
Who, for a few misprisions of wit,
Are charged by these who tentimes worse commit;
And for misjudging some unhappy scenes,
Are censured for't with more unlucky sense;
When all their worst miscarriages delight,
And please more than the best that pedants write."

frequently, particularly when Fletcher had no longer the advantage of subjecting his plays to the judicious Beaumont, betraying haste and carelessness in the progress towards the catastrophe. Fletcher may be, in some degree, exculpated for this by the multitude of his dramatic compositions, with which it seems he could not furnish his friends the players fast enough to satisfy the eager demand of the public. A proof of this occurs in the preface to a book of the seventeenth century,[8] sufficiently near the period in which he flourished, to deserve credit for the information it contains: "It is reported of Mr Fletcher, that, though he writ with such a free and sparkling genius, that future ages shall scarcely ever parallel, yet his importunate comedians would not only crowd upon him such impertinencies, which to him seemed needless and lame excuses, his works being so good, his indignation rendered them as the only bad lines his modest Thalia was ever humbled with." From this, the importunate haste of the performers at once appears; and we also learn that many of the spots which disfigure the most beautiful of his dramas are to be attributed to

[8] The Mysteries of Love and Eloquence, 1685; quoted in the British Bibliographer, vol. I. p. 523.

his good-natured but ill-timed complaisance to the actors.[9]

It must be acknowledged, as a great failing

[9] The defects of Fletcher's plots, and the injudicious multiplicity of incidents in many of his plays, are summed up with great candour and judgment in some Remarks on English Comedy, lately published:—"Fletcher, with the extremity of negligence, run his actors into a chaos of incident and bustle, without much attention to propriety, probability, or, indeed, any thing more than throwing a comic light upon each isolated scene. The whole was winded up with some extraordinary accident, some unexpected discovery, some sudden change of mind and temper in a leading personage, or such other similar inartificial expedient, as no audience could admit to be fitting and natural, though they might be, perhaps, too much amused with the events preceding the catastrophe, to be critically scrupulous about the mode in which it was accomplished."—*The British Drama, Lond.* 1811. 8vo. vol. III. p. ii.

There is a curious resemblance between the bustle and stir of Fletcher's comedies, and that of the plays of his dramatic contemporaries in Spain. The comedies of Calderon, Lope de Vega, Moreto, and other poets of the peninsula, particularly those which delineate the manners of the higher ranks at the time, and which the Spaniards call *comedias de capa y espada*, because they are performed in the well-known Spanish dress of the mantle and the sword, contain a similar profusion of incident, and betray a degree of haste and inattention in the composition, far beyond that of which Fletcher has been accused. With the general character of Lope de Vega's comedies, the English public has been made acquainted by Lord Holland in a most satisfactory manner; and it is to be lamented that his lordship's researches respecting the comedies of Calderon and Guillen de Castro, in most respects the superiors of Lope, particularly in richness of fancy, brilliancy of colouring, and pathos, have not as yet been communicated to the public.

in both our poëts, that they were not always content with the ordinary course of nature, but were too fond of introducing incidents strained to the highest pitch of probability, and sometimes surpassing the bounds of nature. In the general mechanism of their plots also, they were certainly surpassed by Massinger; the events are often too much crowded together, and not always connected with sufficient art. But, after allowing these failings to their full extent, our poets will not be denied the praise of generally supporting the interest throughout, of fixing our attention in a lively manner upon the fortunes of those characters for whom they intend to engage our interest in a peculiar degree, and of the proper adaptation of the sentiments to the character by whom they are uttered.

Like the rest of the dramatists of the time, with the exception of Ben Jonson, Cartwright, and Randolph, our poets, and Fletcher in particular, seldom thought it necessary to invent a tale for the plot of their dramas, but generally had recourse to the prolific stores of the Italian and Spanish novelists, where they found an exhaustless mine of subject for the exercise of their dramatic talents, in the same manner as the dramatists of Greece had recourse to the

traditional tales of their gods and ancient heroes. To this source must be ascribed the multitude of incidents, the bustle and stir, and duplication of plots, which have been so often censured in the plays of the seventeenth century by the advocates for the three unities. In some instances, the different plots in one drama are not sufficiently connected, and run parallel to each other from the first act to the last, without being sufficiently made to bear upon each other; but our poets are never guilty of this defect in an equal degree with Dryden in The Spanish Fryar, and Southerne in his Oroonoko. In many cases, the multiplicity of novels judiciously combined into the plot of one play affords a strong specimen of the poet's art. The comedy of Women Pleased, for instance, is founded on at least four different stories, but they are connected with so much skill that no unnatural result is produced.

The general character of the dramatic works of our authors is summed up with great judgment by Dryden, in the following passage of his Essay on Dramatic Poesy, printed in 1666:

"Beaumont and Fletcher had, with the advantages of Shakspeare's wit, which was their precedent, great and natural gifts, improved by

study; Beaumont especially being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and it is thought used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots. What value he had for him appears by the verses he wrote to him, and therefore I need speak no farther of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem was Philaster; for before that they had written two or three very unsuccessfully; as the like is reported of Ben Jonson, before he writ Every Man in his Humour: Their plots were generally more regular than Shakspeare's, especially those that were made before Beaumont's death: And they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better; whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet can ever paint as they have done. Humour, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe; they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, *love*. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection; what words have since been taken in are rather superfluous than necessary. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage,

two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakspeare's or Jonson's; the reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suit generally with all men's humour. Shakspeare's language is likewise a little obsolete; and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs."

Mr Gifford, in the introduction to his edition of Massinger, has remarked, that "Beaumont is as sublime and Fletcher as pathetic" as Shakspeare. The former of these positions seems to be hazarded somewhat at random, but the latter may be granted with some hesitation. The exquisite touches of natural pathos in which the compositions of our poets, and of Fletcher in particular, abound, set their superiority over most dramatic writers in this point in a strong light. Though the productions of Shakspeare stand unrivalled with respect to the frequent occurrence of single brilliant passages applicable to most sensations of the mind and situations of life, there are many entire scenes in Beaumont and Fletcher, which, in point of eloquence, and the expression of natural affections, hardly yield to the most celebrated scenes of that matchless poet. Dry-

den observes:[9] "The difference between Shakspeare and Fletcher in their plotting seems to be this, that Shakspeare moves more terror, and Fletcher more compassion; for the first had a more masculine, a bolder, and more fiery genius; the second a more soft and womanish. In the mechanic beauties of the plot, which are the observation of the three unities, time, place, and action, they are both deficient; but Shakspeare most." Beaumont's genius seems to have approached that of Shakspeare nearer than that of Fletcher, in boldness and manliness of conception and execution, while he, at the same time, had a strong teint of Ben Jonson in his mind. He frequently personifies humour, not only in his comic, but even in his serious characters. His pathetic powers he has fully demonstrated in Philaster. Fletcher possessed the same talents, but the same are not predominant in an equal degree. He yields to Beaumont in the delineation of strong and manly minds, but he excels him in pathos, and in his female characters, which, making allowance for his disposition to overstrain their virtues and vices, may be pronounced superior to those of almost any dramatist. Less rigidly attached to Ben Jonson than

[9] Preface to Troilus and Cressida.

his associate, he has, notwithstanding, proved, particularly in The Woman-Hater and Nice Valour, that it was not want of ability which led him to a less artificial delineation of humour in most of the comedies which he produced after the death of Beaumont.

One undisputed superiority in Shakspeare, is his power of employing supernatural agency; and, in this respect, our poets not only yield the palm without question, but fall very low indeed, whenever they attempt to trespass upon his ground. Fortunately, they seldom venture into the world of spirits, and their complete failure whenever they attempt it, as in Cupid's Revenge and The Prophetess, is in some measure excused by the consideration, that none of their most illustrious contemporaries succeeded better. Middleton and Dekkar, two poets of the second rank, alone succeeded in what may be termed the lower department of supernatural agency.

In general, the characters are well discriminated and well sustained in the plays of our authors; but here again they must yield a decided preference to Shakspeare, who was alone endued with a genius which could pourtray every variation of character, influenced by every passion

and affection. Their talent, as well as that of Massinger, Jonson, and the second-rate poets of the time, was not, like his, boundless, but confined to the delineation of particular descriptions of character. Fletcher's easy gentlemen have always been allowed to exceed those of all other poets; his education, and the society he lived in, were, in this respect, of peculiar advantage to him. Had he been of low birth, and forced to struggle with adversity, like most of the writers for the stage at the time, we should, perhaps, not have found such perfect delineations of young men of spirit and fashion as Don John in The Chances, Mirabel in The Wild-Goose Chace, or Cleremont in The Little French Lawyer. There is great variety displayed in Fletcher's gallants; the steady honour of Don Jamie[1] and De Garde,[2] the sprightly Piniero[3] and Leandro,[4] are equally portraits of nature with the madcap pranks of Monsieur Thomas, and of Wildbrain, in the Night-Walker, and the profligacy of Valentine[5] and the younger Loveless.[6] Fletcher is likewise peculiarly happy in delineating the passions of a lover; and, among many instances, Demetrius in The Humorous Lieutenant, Ar-

[1] Spanish Curate. [2] Wild-Goose Chace. [3] Island Princess.
[4] Spanish Curate. [5] Wit Without Money. [6] Scornful Lady.

musia in The Island Princess, and Francisco in Monsieur Thomas, may be adduced. The character of Amintor in The Maid's Tragedy is a strong proof of Beaumont's talents in the same line. And here the vast superiority of the elder drama over that of the eighteenth century may be justly asserted. In the former, the lovers are as ardent as in the latter; they frequently sink under the vehemence of their affections, but they are not weakened by the false delicacy and sentimentality of the gallants with which the dramas of our own days abound. The power of love in overcoming habits, which apparently extinguish and set the passions at defiance, is most admirably exemplified in The Elder Brother, and in Love's Cure. In both plays, and particularly in the former, the gradual progress of the passion is delineated with the true hand of a master, without overstepping the modesty of nature.—Philaster affords an instance of a lover distracted by jealousy, and weighed down by misfortune; his character is highly finished, and reflects great credit on Beaumont, who appears to have had the principal share in that drama. He has been called a Hamlet, racked with jealousy; but, though he certainly bears some distant resemblance to that character, he

is a perfect original. Virolet, in The Double Marriage, bears a much more striking likeness to Hamlet; and for that very reason, though the passions of his mind are in many scenes drawn with great truth and delicacy, suffers by the comparison. Our poets have left us an admirable portrait of an honest man reduced to extremity by misfortune, but still borne up by a high sense of honour, and an untainted conscience, in the character of Montague, in The Honest Man's Fortune.

In the delineation of heroic characters, our authors yield to few dramatists. The pure spirit of valour is most happily exemplified in Caractacus;[7] the bluntness of an old soldier in Penius[8] and Melantius;[9] heroism, combined with the most ardent loyalty, in Arcas[1] and Aëcius;[2] and bravery, tainted by ambition, in Maximus.[3] Hengo[4] is indisputably superior not only to Shakspeare's Arthur, but to any generous heroic boy who has ever been exhibited.

Another description of character which Fletcher is peculiarly fond of introducing, and generally with the happiest success, is that of the

[7] Bondoca. [8] *Ibid.* [9] Maid's Tragedy.
[1] Loyal Subject. [2] Valentinian. [3] *Ibid.*
[4] Bonduca.

blunt sturdy Englishman, an enemy to foppery and affectation of all kinds, and gifted with a high sense of honour, without making any parade about the matter. Of this description are Rutilio in The Custom of the Country, Tibalt in the Sea Voyage, De Vitry in Thierry and Theodoret, and Norandine in The Knight of Malta. To a kindred class the celebrated character of Leon,[5] and that of Jacomo in The Captain, belong. The unexpected opening of Leon's true character, after the simplicity he had assumed to obtain his ends with Margarita, produces the most happy dramatic effect. Jacomo is a less interesting character, and even repulsive, but he bears the true semblance of nature.

Old men, agitated by violent anger, are also the peculiar forte of Fletcher. Cassibelane in the Laws of Candy, Alberto and Baptista in The Fair Maid of the Inn, and Champernel in The Little French Lawyer, are instances of that species of characters, when they retain a sufficient degree of dignity to command respect; while Antonio in The Chances, and Alphonso in The Pilgrim, illustrate the ludicrous effects of violent rage carried to excess, without any adequate means of making itself respected or feared.

[5] Rule a Wife and have a Wife.

In the delineation of villainy, our poets are not entitled to the same degree of praise. We do not meet with such characters in their plays as Iago, Richard III., Sir Giles Overreach, or Luke. They generally content themselves with investing their bad men with every mark of downright depravity, without those different shades with which Shakspeare so happily discriminated his characters of the kind. Perhaps the most finished villain in their dramatic performances is Septimius, in The False One; but I suspect that Massinger had a hand in that play, and perhaps furnished that character. If our poets did not succeed in their delineations of tyrants, sycophants, and murderers, they are, perhaps, still less happy when they wish to present their audience with vicious women. Hippolyta in The Custom of the Country, Lelia in The Captain, and, above all, Brunhalt in Thierry and Theodoret, have, no doubt, their prototypes in nature, but they are too vicious for the stage. Some of their lowest female characters also are disgusting beyond endurance; and the error of judgment, or rather complacency to the taste of the audience, which could defile their dramas with such women as the Priestess in The Mad Lover, Megra in Philaster, and Panura in The Island Princess, cannot be sufficiently reprobated.

But, in delineating the brighter side of the female character, as has been before observed, our poets not only exceeded all their contemporaries, not excepting Shakspeare, but all their successors. Amongst such a profusion of admirable portraits, it is difficult to select examples. The meekness and patience of Aspatia,[6] the saint-like purity and devotion of Ordella,[7] the ardour of affection of Euphrasia,[8] the burning love and resignation of Juliana,[9] the firmness and heroism of Edith,[1] and the tenderness of Evanthe,[2] furnish specimens of every virtue estimable in the female character, which these authors, particularly Fletcher, must have studied with peculiar success in every shade and variation. They are no less happy in the sprightly girls and jolly widows, who so frequently occur in their plays, and who form a most striking contrast to the pale and sickly heroines of our sentimental comedies. The Widow in Wit Without Money, The Scornful Lady, Alinda in The Pilgrim, Frank in The Captain, and the Niece in Wit at Several Weapons, may be referred to as proving this assertion. Estifania is a well-known character of a different description, but delineated in

[6] Maid's Tragedy. [7] Thierry and Theodoret. [8] Philaster.
[9] Double Marriage. [1] Rollo. [2] Wife for a Month.

the most happy manner, and with the truest colouring.

With respect to the comic characters of our poets, they may be obviously classed under two heads. In the comedies written by Beaumont and Fletcher conjointly, as well as in some of the earlier unassisted productions of the latter, they chiefly attached themselves to the school of Ben Jonson, which was almost exclusively confined to the delineation of the different humours, then the fashionable term for any peculiar predominant passion, acquired habit, or studied affectation. While this gave constant opportunity for the display of extreme drollery, and a peculiar dry and harsh, but often very *piquante* and high-seasoned, species of character, it too frequently led the poet into extravagance, at least to our conceptions, though we have reason to believe that the metropolis furnished real examples of some humours which appear to us far beyond the bounds of probability. In this walk of comedy, our authors yield the palm to none of the poets who attached themselves to this school, with the exception of Ben Jonson; and, in many instances, they approach to the excellence of the latter very nearly. The characters of La Writ,[3]

[3] The Little French Lawyer.

Lazarillo,[4] Bessus,[5] the Humorous Lieutenant, and Lapet,[6] are only inferior to a few of the most distinguished humours of Jonson. In some instances, our poets applied this peculiar description of composition, which is certainly most proper for comedy, to comparativelv serious purposes; as in the characters of Arbaces,[7] Memnon,[8] Shamont,[9] the Passionate Lord,[1] and Gondarino;[2] but, while they gave undoubted proofs of the versatility of their talents, they certainly exceeded the bounds of nature in an additional degree. The influence of any particular passion, sufficiently strong to constitute what our ancestors called a humour, has a very comic effect; but it will always fail to excite any high degree of interest for a serious character.

The comic characters which are more peculiar to Fletcher's style, and which chiefly occur in those plays which he produced after the death of Beaumont, combine, with an equal portion of drollery and comic effect as those of Ben Jonson's school, more nature and reality, the humour being principally produced by the innate qualities of their minds, influenced by their re-

[4] The Woman-Hater. [5] King and no King. [6] Nice Valour.
[7] King and no King. [8] Mad Lover. [9] Nice Valour.
[1] *Ibid.* [2] The Woman-Hater.

lative situations of life. The peevish temper of Calianax,[3] the pedantry of Sir Roger the chaplain,[4] the admirable characters of the fortune-hunter Michael Perez,[5] and the avaricious, purse-proud, and gluttonous Cacafogo,[6] are specimens of real humour, not transgressing the bounds of nature, and equally applicable to every age and country. The characters of Bartolus, Lopez, and Diego, in The Spanish Curate, of the merry Ancient in The Loyal Subject, of Sebastian in Monsieur Thomas, and Alexander in The Coxcomb, may likewise be adduced as instances of the versatility of Fletcher's comic talents, which were far more extensive than those of Beaumont, Jonson, Massinger, and all his contemporaries, and only exceeded by that of Shakspeare. The superiority of the clowns of the latter will readily be granted. Fletcher, however, though at a great distance, approaches nearer to him in these characters than any of the poets of the time; as the clowns in Nice Valour, The Fair Maid of the Inn, A Wife for a Month, and the Prophetess, evince.

These observations on the comic characters of our poets, will also apply to their style of hu-

[3] Maid's Tragedy. [4] Scornful Lady.
[5] Rule a Wife and have a Wife. [6] *Ibid.*

mour, which is equally diversified, and variously excellent. Both our poets excelled in the dry and severe humour so characteristic of Ben Jonson; but Fletcher is generally acknowledged to have possessed the peculiar talent of quick repartee and smart dialogue in a degree beyond any poet of the time. In the early plays of our associate poets, as in The Woman-Hater and The Knight of the Burning Pestle, they were much attached to the mock-heroic style; and the latter performance is not excelled by any subsequent production of the kind.

Beaumont and Fletcher are reprehensible in an equal, perhaps a superior, degree with the other dramatic writers of the age, for the frequency of gross and indelicate allusions occurring in their works. A critic, who does not take into consideration the great change of manners which has taken place since their time, will at once condemn them; but, as we know that Fletcher's muse was considered as remarkably chaste by his contemporaries, we must conclude, what indeed we learn from studying all the authors of the time, that our ancestors, in the days of King James, would hear, without the least offence, phrases and allusions which now would be stamped with every mark of public disappro-

bation Harris, an eminent preacher and presbyterian divine, speaks of Fletcher's

> "Muse, chaste as those flames whence they took their fire;
> No spurious composures amongst thine,
> Got in adultery 'twixt love and wine."

Palmer, a collegian of Oxford, thus addresses the spirit of Fletcher:

> "Thou, like thy writings, innocent and clean,
> Ne'er practised a new vice to make one scene;
> None of thy ink had gall, and ladies can
> Securely hear thee sport without a fan."

Finally, Lovelace, a poet of considerable fancy, holds up The Custom of the Country, the grossest play in the collection, and which, as Dryden asserts, contains more bawdry than all the dramas of his age, as a pattern for exposing vice modestly, and without offending the ears of the chastest audience.[7] The Restoration, while it partly banished these gross phrases and direct allusions, introduced a more covert, and therefore more dangerous, kind of indelicacy. A corrupt imagination in the higher ranks will perhaps shrink with disgust from the perusal of the older plays, on finding some directly licentious

[7] See also the prologue to the Woman-Hater, vol. X. p. 7.

passages; while it dwells with complacency on the genteel and seductive licentiousness of Dryden, Etherege, Otway, and Vanbrugh, where the preponderance of mischief indubitably rests. The serious love-scenes of our poets are almost entirely free from any indelicacy; indeed, the purity of affection, and the mutual interchange of passionate protestation, have never been so beautifully and delicately executed as in the plays of our poets, and particularly in those of Fletcher.

To consider every different species of dramatic style in which our authors have excelled, would lead us into a field of criticism far beyond the bounds of this prefatory memoir. The narratives which occur in their plays are told with great elegance and animation, and none more so than the descriptions of sea-fights,[8] a species of warfare which had, within a few years, become the peculiar boast of the nation. They are also most eloquent in the harangues which occur in their heroic plays; and the altercations between their characters are replete with vivacity and pointed reply. In descriptive passages, they are peculiarly happy; and the morality

[8] See, for instance, The Double Marriage, The Knight of Malta, and The Fair Maid of the Inn.

and justness of the sentiments inculcated in the serious part of their productions, is generally unimpeachable. The impulses and effects of each several passion, they have, in most instances, exhibited with great truth and consistency, though Fletcher was too frequently betrayed, by the hasty and importunate demands of the players upon his muse, into a defalcation in his latter acts; and hence theconversion of many of his depraved characters is effected in too sudden and inartificial a manner.

As Beaumont and Fletcher had received a good education, and as they were at least men of polite learning, we may suppose that they were not guilty of those gross deficiencies and mistakes which we meet with in the writings of some of their less-favoured contemporaries. Accordingly, they in general succeed well in pourtraying the character of the ancient Roman; but when engaged on a French, Italian, or Spanish story, they could not divest themselves of their nationality; and hence their foreigners, particularly those of the lower rank, like those of all the dramatic poets of the time, Jonson not excepted, are perfect Englishmen. The anachronisms with which they may be charged occur very sparingly, consist chiefly in single passages

and allusions from low life, and are by no means so gross as those of their great fellow-poet, Shakspeare.

The excellence of their style has been in general allowed to be transcendent; and Dryden considered their works as a proper standard for the language. They are generally free from constrained phraseology and involved construction; they are not guilty of the artificial and intentional harshness of Jonson's language, and seldom of those unnatural clenches which Shakspeare too frequently may be accused of.—Massinger's style, as his last editor observes, approaches that of Fletcher in a considerable degree; but when he charges the poetry of the latter with a degree of morbid softness, he certainly forgot the animated and nervous style of many of his serious plays; for instance, Bonduca, The Loyal Subject, Valentinian, and The Double Marriage. The songs which occur in these plays possess, in general, a singular degree of sweetness and natural elegance; in which requisites they are only inferior to some of Shakspeare's, while they infinitely excel those which are interspersed in the plays of Jonson, Massinger, and other dramatists of the time.

Notwithstanding the close connection which

subsisted between Beaumont and Fletcher, and the congeniality of their genius in many points of view, there is a striking and evident difference in their versification, which, it is singular, has never been noticed. As an apt and obvious instance, their joint production, entitled Four Plays in One, may be selected. The dissimilarity of the metre in the two first of the Triumphs, or short plays, from that of the two last, cannot fail to strike every attentive reader. In the former, the general cast of the versification has some degree of affinity to that of Shakspeare. The sense of one line is continually run into that of the next, the breaks in the middle are very frequent, and the recurrence of female, or double terminations of the lines, is even less frequent than in Shakspeare, though more so than in Ben Jonson. The versification in the two latter Triumphs is of a very different nature. The greater number of the verses end with some division of a sentence, the breaks in the middle occur more sparingly and are less striking, and the number of double and treble terminations considerably exceeds that of the single or male.[9] This last

[9] To ascertain the comparative proportion of male and female terminations, the editor has taken an equal number of lines from The Triumph of Honour, written by Beaumont, and

peculiarity is the most striking, and runs through all the plays which Fletcher produced without assistance, except where he assumes the mock-heroic style, as in The Woman-Hater and The

from the Triumph of Death, by Fletcher. Amongst one hundred verses from the second scene of the former, there are only fourteen which have double terminations; whereas, in an equal number from the fourth scene of the latter, there are no less than seventy-six double and six triple terminations. (See also the Observations on The Two Noble Kinsmen, vol. XIII. p. 160.) Fletcher has even lines with quadruple and quintuple terminations: *e. g.*

"Have ye to swear that you will see it *executed*"—
"Of longing to be one of your *appurtenances*"—
"No, sir, I dare not leave her to that *solitariness.*"

Another peculiarity of Fletcher's metre, which also prevails more or less in all the dramatic verse of the time, and which must of course be attended to by the reader, is the introduction of dactyls, principally at the pause in the middle of a verse. From inattention to this particular, or rather from wilful oversight, Steevens was frequently induced to tamper with Shakspeare's text in the most unwarrantable manner. For instance, in the line—

"Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave *you* all,"

he omits the monosyllable, *you*. Mr Malone properly restored it in his edition; but his observation, that the words *father*, *brother*, and *rather*, were pronounced like monosyllables, is not correct. They were pronounced in the same manner as at present, and the last syllable, with the next one, were uttered like the short syllables of the ancient dactyl; and this irregularity in the old dramatic metre is rather a beauty than a defect, as it varies the modulation of blank verse, which in more modern poets is too often tiresome by its uniformity.

Knight of the Burning Pestle, and likewise in The Faithful Shepherdess, in which, being rather a pastoral poem than a play, he, no doubt, restrained himself purposely, and assumed greater regularity. On the contrary, in most of the plays which he produced in conjunction with Beaumont, we either find their different styles of versification alternating, or that of Beaumont predominating. In the latter case, as in Philaster, The Maid's Tragedy, King and no King, and The Honest Man's Fortune, we may fairly suppose that Fletcher's associate produced the greater part; or that, in revising the lines of his friend, he gave them the cast of metre peculiar to himself.

It was the generally received opinion, in the seventeenth century, that, during the lifetime of Beaumont, that poet's principal business consisted in correcting the exuberance of Fletcher's wit. John Earle, Bishop of Salisbury, who knew them both, and who wrote an elegant copy of verses on the death of the former, informed that respectable antiquary, Aubrey, of this particular, who has reported it in his Natural History and Antiquities of Surrey.[1] The same tradition is

[1] And yet Seward grounds his refutation of this tradition principally on the testimony of Bishop Earle.

thus mentioned by Cartwright, in his verses prefixed to the folio collection of 1647:

"Though when all Fletcher writ, and the entire
Man was indulged unto that sacred fire,
His thoughts, and his thoughts' dress, appeared both such,
That 'twas his happy fault to do too much;
Who therefore wisely did submit each birth
To knowing Beaumont ere it did come forth,
Working again, until he said, *'twas fit*,
And made him the sobriety of his wit:
Though thus he called his judge into his fame,
And, for that aid, allowed him half the name,
'Tis known, that sometimes he did stand alone,
That both the spunge and pencil were his own;
That himself judged himself, could singly do,
And was at last Beaumont and Fletcher too."

To the same purpose the verses of Harris may be quoted, who, speaking of Fletcher's muse, says—

——— "Which we admired when thou didst sit
But as a joint commissioner in wit;
When it had plummets hung on to suppress
Its too-luxuriant growing mightiness:
Till, as that tree which scorns to be kept down,
Thou grew'st to govern the whole stage alone."

These assertions have been very generally considered as injurious to the fame of Beaumont; and Seward, in particular, took up his cause against those, who, in his opinion, wished to enhance their praises of Fletcher at the expence

of his previous associate, with great warmth, but, unfortunately, with little knowledge of the subject. Long before, Dr Mayne, in a decided manner, endeavoured to refute these reports. Addressing the shades of both our poets, he says—

——— "You, who had *equal fire*,
And did each other mutually inspire;
Whether one did contrive, the other write,
Or one framed the plot, the other did indite;
Whether one found the matter, the other dress,
Or the one disposed what the other did express:
Where'er your parts between yourselves lay, we,
In all things which you did, but one thread see,
So evenly drawn out, so gently spun,
That art with nature ne'er did smoother run."

Sir John Birkenhead is still more explicit to the same purpose:—

"Some think your wits of two complexions framed,
That one the sock, th' other the buskin claimed;
That, should the stage embattle all its force,
Fletcher would lead the foot, Beaumont the horse:
But you were both for both, not semi-wits;
Each piece is wholly two, yet never splits:
Ye are not two faculties, and one soul still,
He th' understanding, thou the quick free-will;
Not as two voices in one song embrace,
Fletcher's keen treble, and deep Beaumont's base;
Two, full, congenial souls; still both prevailed;
His muse and thine were quartered, not empaled:
Both brought your ingots, both toiled at the mint,
Beat, melted, sifted, till no dross stuck in't;

Then in each other's scales weighed every grain,
Then smoothed and burnished, then weighed all again;
Stamped both your names upon't at one bold hit,
Then, then 'twas coin, as well as bullion-wit."

It must, however, be observed, that a tradition so strongly supported as that of Beaumont's lopping the luxuriances of Fletcher's imagination, must have had some foundation in reality. The powers of judgment which he possessed are often celebrated by his contemporaries; and Dryden says that he was even consulted by Ben Jonson in the plotting of his plays. But to confine Beaumont's talents to that particular is certainly in the highest degree unjust. He undoubtedly produced a great portion of those plays in which his name is joined to that of Fletcher; and amongst these are some of their most masterly productions. The latter certainly run into the extremes of license and carelessness in some of the plays in which he had not the benefit of his friend's superior judgment, though in every other species of poetical talent he equalled, and, in most respects, excelled him.

The great demand for the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, as well as the testimony of many writers, prove their great popularity during their lifetime. Some of their dramas, however, and

particularly those of an early date, had to encounter all the severity of the censure of the audience. It has already been observed, that that admirable burlesque, The Knight of the Burning Pestle, was damned, probably by the exertions of the London citizens; and that The Faithful Shepherdess and The Coxcomb met with a similar fate, the latter on account of its length. From Richard Brome's verses on Monsieur Thomas,[2] it would seem that sévéral other plays of Fletcher's met with an unfavourable reception. Speaking of that comedy, he says—

"And yet perhaps it did participate
At first presenting but of common fate;
When Ignorance was judge, and but a few
What was legitimate, what bastard, knew.
The world's grown wiser now;[3] each man can say,
If Fletcher made it, 'tis an excellent play."

The popularity of our poets was not in the least diminished when the public could no longer expect novelty of entertainment from their pens. A great number of their pieces continued to occupy the stage, and many of their earliest productions were revived for the court, notwith-

[2] Vol. VI. p. 419.
[3] In 1639, when Brome published this comedy.

standing most of the other plays acted before the royal family at Christmas, and other seasons of festivity, were the new performances produced during the year at the public theatres.

When the civil wars destroyed monarchy, the stage, as a kind of appendage to the magnificence of a royal residence, suffered a complete defeat; and the admirers of the theatre were obliged to have recourse to private and illegal opportunities to enjoy their favourite entertainment. Sometimes plays were acted with great caution at the Cock-pit theatre; and sometimes the players bribed the commander of the guard at Whitehall to suffer them to perform for a few days; but they were continually liable to the rude interruptions of Cromwell's independent martialists; and on one occasion, while presenting the tragedy of Rollo, they were surprised and carried to prison.[4] Kirkman, in the preface to The Wits, or Sport upon Sport, a collection of drolls or farces, extracted from the most popular plays, and principally from those of Beaumont and Fletcher,[5] printed in 1672, gives us the following curious and lively ac-

[4] Wright's Historia Histrionica.

[5] Of the twenty pieces collected in Kirkman's volume, ten are taken from the plays of our poets.

count of the shifts and stratagems to which the players were forced to have recourse during the time of the Commonwealth :—" When the public theatres were shut up, and the actors forbidden to present us with any of their tragedies, because we had enough of that in earnest ; and comedies, because the vices of the age were too lively and smartly represented ; then all that we could divert ourselves with were these humours and pieces of plays, which, passing under the name of a merry conceited fellow, called Bottom the Weaver, Simpleton the Smith, John Swabber, or some such title, were only allowed us, and that by stealth too, and under pretence of rope-dancing, or the like ; and these being all that was permitted us, great was the confluence of the auditors ; and these small things were as profitable, and as great get-pennies to the actors, as any of our late-famed plays. I have seen the Red-Bull play-house, which was a large one, so full, that as many went back for want of room as had entered ; and as meanly as you may now think of these drolls, they were then acted by the best comedians then and now in being ; and, I may say, by some that then exceeded all now living, by name, the incomparable Robert Cox, who

was not only the principal actor, but also the contriver and author of most of these farces."

In the year 1659, the players began to revive at the near prospect of the approaching restoration of Charles II. Rhodes, a bookseller, formed a company, who played at the Cock-pit in Drury-Lane, and at the head of which was the celebrated Betterton.[6] Downes[7] has furnished us with a list of thirteen stock-plays which were acted by this company, who afterwards became the king's servants, amongst which there are no less than eight of our poets';[8] and in a somewhat different list of twenty acted by the same company, as enumerated by Sir Henry Herbert, ten of theirs occur.[9] Their plays were no less

[6] In the list of plays in which Betterton was particularly eminent, subjoined to his Life, the following of Beaumont and Fletcher are enumerated: The Loyal Subject, The Maid in the Mill, The Wild-Goose Chace, The Mad Lover, A Wife for a Month, The Spanish Curate, Rule a Wife and have a Wife, The Tamer Tamed, Valentinian, The Prophetess, and The Rivals, an alteration of The Two Noble Kinsmen.

[7] Roscius Anglicanus, Waldron's edition, 1789, 8vo. p. 26.

[8] The Loyal Subject, Maid in the Mill, Wild-Goose Chase, Spanish Curate, Mad Lover, Wife for a Month, Rule a Wife and have a Wife, and The Tamer Tamed.

[9] The Humorous Lieutenant, Beggar's Bush, Tamer Tamed, Wit without Money, Maid's Tragedy, Philaster, Rollo, Elder Brother, King and no King, and The Widow. Among twenty-five plays performed between the 5th of November 1660, and

popular at the rival theatre in Drury-Lane, which was opened on the 8th of April, 1663, with The Humorous Lieutenant, which had the extraordinary run of twelve nights. In Downes's list of the fifteen principal stock-plays of that theatre, there occur seven of Beaumont and Fletcher's,[1] only three of Shakspeare's, and the same number of Ben Jonson's. Dryden observes, that in 1666, when he wrote his Essay on Dramatic Poesy, there were two of our poets' plays acted for one of Shakspeare's or Jonson's; and Waller, in his prologue to The Maid's Tragedy, says—

—— "Of all our elder plays,
This and Philaster have the loudest fame."

From the preface to the edition of 1711, it appears that these plays continued then to enjoy great popularity; and in 1742, when Theobald

the 31st of January next, enumerated in Sir Henry Herbert's MSS., there are no less than twelve of our poets'.

[1] The Humorous Lieutenant, Rule a Wife and have a Wife, Maid's Tragedy, King and no King, Rollo, Scornful Lady, and Elder Brother. In his list of twenty-one plays which were also popular, but less frequently acted, we have Philaster, The Chances, Beggar's Bush, and The Widow. Among the actors at that theatre, Hart excelled in the characters of Arbaces, Amintor, Rollo, and Don John; and Major Mohun in those of Melantius and Mardonius.

began to comment on them, they retained a great portion of public favour. In later days, however, they have shared in the oblivion to which all our ancient dramas, unless upheld by the national pride in those productions which bear the magic name of Shakspeare, are at present condemned. Excepting the comedies of Rule a Wife and have a Wife and The Chances, none of our poets' dramas are performed. Mr Colman the elder made a laudable endeavour, soon after the middle of the last century, to draw the attention of the age towards their excellent productions, by altering and reviving Philaster and Bonduca, and, for a short time, the public acknowledged their excellency; but they were soon fated to be forgotten, while the London audiences could not be satiated with the flimsy productions of the modern stage, with tragedies of the French school, regular without force, and declamatory without eloquence, comedies seasoned with common-place sentiment instead of wit and humour, and melo-dramas without consistency or sense.

The works of our poets have been a continual source of plunder for their successors, sometimes without any acknowledgment, and at others, with the modest declaration that the hint

was taken from Beaumont and Fletcher, when, in fact, their plot was borrowed, and their language merely reduced to prose. Sir William Davenant, the Duke of Buckingham, Farquhar, Cibber, and other dramatists down to Tom D'Urfey, Settle, and Motteux, made liberal use of the plentiful stores left by their illustrious predecessors. Others, amongst whom are Dryden, Otway, and Rowe, borrowed incidents, characters, and single scenes, without acknowledging the obligation; and to trace all their lawful property in the more modern plays would be an endless and very thankless task.

It seems to have been the particular study of the actors of the time, who were in possession of the plays of our poets, to retain them in manuscript as long as possible, probably on account of their superior popularity; and hence the number of those which were printed separately in quarto during their lifetime is very inconsiderable.[a] A few others found their way to the press after the demise of Fletcher. The re-

[a] Those which appeared before the death of Beaumont are The Woman-Hater, The Knight of the Burning Pestle, The Faithful Shepherdess, and The Masque. During the ten years that Fletcher survived him, only four others were given to the press, viz.—The Scornful Lady, King and no King, The Maid's Tragedy, and Philaster.

mainder, to the number of thirty-four, were carefully retained by the comedians till the time arrived when they furnished an obvious means for their subsistence, which they could no longer derive from their professional exertions. In the year 1647, ten of the players united in publishing them in folio,[3] with a dedication to the despicable Philip Earl of Pembroke, lord-chamberlain, who had no other title to become godfather to the numerous works which were inscribed to him, than what he derived from the eminent patrons of literature from whom he was descended, or with whom he was allied. Shirley, who ranks high among the second class of the dramatic poets of his age, and who was the last of that illustrious race which was extinguished by the civil wars, furnished a preface of considerable elegance, and bearing testimony of his sincere friendship and ardent admiration for the poets; but he was unfortunately deterred, by his modesty, from writing their lives. "He

[3] The following is the title of this valuable edition :—"Comedies and Tragedies. Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Gentlemen. Never printed before, and now published by the Authors' originall Copies. *Si quid habent veri Vatum præsagia, vivam.* London : Printed for Humphrey Robinson, at the Three Pigeons, and for Humphrey Mosely, at the Prince's Arms, in St Paul's Church-yard. 1647."

must be a bold man," he says, "that dares undertake to write their lives." What has been lost by his thus shrinking from a task which he was fully capable of performing, as he had lived in strict friendship with Fletcher, may be easily gathered from the present memoirs, which, from the scantiness, or rather almost total want of materials, cannot deserve the title of lives. Thirty-six recommendatory verses were prefixed by writers of various merit; among whom we find the names of most of the dramatic poets of any consequence who survived Fletcher. That the greater number of the plays were printed from the prompter's copy, is evident from the numerous stage-directions and memorandums in previous scenes, of articles to be got ready for the sequel. The stationer, however, professes, and with apparent truth, that he had restored all those scenes and speeches which were omitted at the representation. In point of accuracy this edition is not superior to the first edition of Shakspeare. The blunders are very numerous, consisting not only in literal and verbal mistakes, but in the omission of entire lines; but, in point of authority, it is, like almost all first editions of the seventeenth century, far preferable to the second edition.

Oldys, in his manuscript notes on Langbaine,

says, that several of our poets' dramatic performances were printed in 1650. This, however, extended only to the re-publication of such quarto plays as had become scarce, and which were in demand, to complete the collection of their works.

In 1679 a second folio edition was printed,[4] including all those which, having been previously printed in quarto, were not contained in the folio of 1647. In the address of the booksellers, we are informed that they had obtained a copy corrected by a gentleman who had "had an intimacy with both our authors, and had been a spectator of most of them when they were acted in their lifetime." On the same authority, they inserted several prologues, epilogues, and songs, omitted in the former edition. A few of the more obvious mistakes are certainly corrected, and, it is not improbable, on some degree of authority; but in their stead we have innumerable fresh blunders, and too often an awkward and rash correction of the genuine text. In this

[4] Thus entitled:—"Fifty Comedies and Tragedies. Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Gentlemen. All in one Volume. Published by the Authors' originall Copies, the Songs to each Play being added. *Si quid habent veri Vatum præsagia, vivam.* London: Printed by J. Macock, for John Martyn, Henry Herringman, Richard Morris. 1679."

copy we find the first attempt to enumerate the *dramatis personæ*, and to many plays the names of the principal original actors at the Blackfriars are prefixed.[5]

In the year 1711 the first edition in octavo appeared, being nothing more than a reprint of the second folio, with an additional portion of blunders. A "Preface, giving some Account of the Authors and their Writings," was prefixed, being a mere transcript from the work of Langbaine, with a few quotations from Dryden and other authors. The only circumstance which gives value to this edition is the plates, which have been considered curious by collectors, as illustrating the costume of the stage at the time.

Theobald, who had commented on Shakspeare with more success than Rowe, Pope, and Warburton, notwithstanding the far superior genius of these rivals, projected, in 1742, critical editions of Ben Jonson and of Beaumont and Fletcher, but his death interrupted both these undertakings, when he had sent the first and one half of the second volume of the latter to the press. His comments on the remainder fell into the hands of Mr Seward, then of Eyam, in

[5] These lists were injudiciously omitted in the later copies, but are now restored.

Derbyshire, subsequently one of the prebends of Lichfield cathedral, and Mr Sympson of Gainsborough, who set about the task of correcting every passage, which they did not immediately comprehend, with due diligence, but with a superlative degree of rashness, and without any adequate knowledge of the language of the time. They divided the plays between them, but mutually assisted and applied to each other on any emergency. Seward appears to have possessed a high sense of the neglected beauties of our poets, (on which account his preface, though abounding in errors and ungrounded hypotheses, deserves to be preserved in every edition of their works,) with a considerable portion of critical acumen. His assistant, Mr Sympson, is not equally happy in his conjectures; but he possessed modesty, caution, and fidelity,—certainly the most essential qualities in an editor,—in a much greater degree, though the example of his assistant, and of the other commentators of his time, frequently led him to offer conjectures when they were utterly unnecessary, and the want of a due acquaintance with the language of the dramatists of that period led him often to find difficulties in passages, which such requisite knowledge would have at once explained to him. These

united editors profess, in the title-page, that their copy has been "*collated with all the former editions.*" But the duties expected from a collator in their days must have been immaterial indeed. They never turned to the old copies excepting in cases of difficulty, generally contenting themselves with referring to the second folio, and hence they frequently make triumphant assertions of having introduced corrections which they either did not know to be the original text of the oldest copies, (many of which they never saw or heard of,) or which they subsequently found to be so, on recurring to these copies; and then, instead of striking out the note containing their happy conjecture, they suffer it to stand, and inform the readers, with a ludicrous triumph and self-sufficiency, that their critical lucubrations are confirmed by referring to the original copy. The explanation of obsolete words, and allusions to the customs and manners of the age, in very few instances occupied any portion of their care, and the explanations which do occur are made at random, or by a reference to Cole's or Bailey's dictionaries. They paid little attention to that very necessary duty of an editor, punctuation, leaving it in general in the same state as in the worthless edition of 1711,

from which they printed. But, to use the words of a subsequent commentator,[6] "the most striking and most unfortunate error in Seward's edition is a preposterous affectation of reducing to metre many passages which the author intended for prose. The plan was ill-conceived and miserably executed; it has led the editors into many difficulties, and, instead of adding honour to the poets, has tended to degrade them; for there is a degree of harmony in good prose which bad verse can never arrive at. In pursuing this plan, the editors appear to have laid it down as a principle, that every line is verse which consists precisely of ten syllables. They have accordingly endeavoured, with much perseverance, to range all the words of the passages they want to improve into lines of that length; to effect this purpose, they have used alternately the guillotine and the rack: with the cruelty of Procustes they lop off unmercifully the limbs of some words, whilst they stretch out others beyond their natural dimensions, till they brought them all to the standard required. By these means they have formed a kind of mongrel style, that does not fall under any known description of language; it is neither verse nor prose, but a jumble between

[6] Mason's Comments, Lond. 1798, 8vo. p. vii.

both, that can lay no just claim to either appellation. They did not consider that dramatic poetry is written to be spoken, not to be told upon the fingers; that it is not so strictly confined by technical rules as some other modes of versification; that a pause in the recital may frequently supply the apparent want of a syllable, and that even the redundancy of a syllable does not necessarily destroy the metre. I cannot indeed suppose that either Shakspeare or Fletcher used to count the syllables in the lines they composed; they appealed to the ear, the true criterion, and if that was satisfied, the line was admitted without a scrutiny." In truth, nothing can be more absurd than the manner in which both the prose and the loose versification of our authors is disfigured in their edition. Their contractions of words and syllables frequently would defy the rough pronunciation of a Pole or Hungarian; while the continual ellipses of vowels, and the strange sequence of consonants, is carried to a degree which exists in none of the living or dead languages.[7]

The late George Colman, who had previously, as we have seen, endeavoured to restore the

[7] See vol. II. p. 129, and vol. X. p. 5, &c. &c. of the present edition.

fame of our poets by reviving some of their master-pieces on the stage, projected a new edition of their works, with the assistance of several other commentators, amongst whom was the late Isaac Reed, whose notes convey almost the only explanations of obsolete terms and allusions which are to be found in that edition. Mr Colman, whose talents were of a very different and far superior nature to those requisite in an illustrator of ancient poetry, undertook a task to which he was far unequal. He possessed nothing of what has been generally, and very absurdly, termed black-letter knowledge, so essential to a commentator on old plays. He and his unknown associates very anxiously removed the unnecessary and impertinent variations of Theobald, Seward, and Sympson; and they appear to have understood many of the most complicated and involved passages, but they too frequently content themselves with merely saying, "we think the old text right," without furnishing the reader, who cannot be supposed to know their reasons for thinking so, with the requisite explanation and comment. With the exception of the notes of Mr Reed, which occur very sparingly, no attempt is made to clear up the very frequent obsolete phrases and allusions to forgotten customs

and circumstances, of which every reader of old plays cannot be supposed to have made himself a master. The editors have also failed in the profession they make in the title-page, that they had collated the text with all the former editions. They were certainly more careful and diligent than the editors of 1750, but they appear not to have had access to all the old quartos, and they too frequently relax from their diligence, being guilty of gross negligence in many instances. They saw the absurdity of Seward's squaring the prose and metre into lines of ten and eleven syllables, and removed his absurd contractions and impertinent omissions; but here they stopped short, and, instead of restoring many passages and entire scenes to their original prose, they suffered them to remain cut down into lines of a vast variety of dimensions, which are scarcely read with less pain than those of Seward. No attempt was made to collect the scattered information respecting the poets, they, like their predecessors, contenting themselves with re-printing the meagre account of their lives prefixed to the edition published in 1711.

The last attempt to clear up the obscurities in these plays, and to point out and correct the mistakes of former editions, appeared in 1798.

the Right Honourable J. Monck Mason, who appears to have a genuine sense of the excellencies of the old dramatists, had edited previously the plays of Massinger, with what success may be learnt from the late edition of his successor, Mr Gifford. He had also commented with rather better success on Shakspeare; and, in the year above-mentioned, he published "Comments on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher," unfortunately abounding in the grossest printer's mistakes, probably occasioned by his distance from the press. His notes are of very different degrees of merit. In many instances he has proved the propriety of the text successfully, and he has pointed out several very necessary corrections overlooked by the former editors. In general, however, he is too much attached to verbal emendations, which are proved unnecessary by recurring to parallel passages in the other contemporary dramatic poets, the due study of which is one of the most essential qualifications of an editor of old plays.

It remains to explain the principles upon which the present editor has proceeded in preparing a new edition of these authors for the public. Strict fidelity to the oldest text, wherever it affords sense, he has considered as his

first and most obvious duty. For this purpose, a careful collation of the text has been instituted with all the old copies of each play, whenever he has been able to obtain a sight of them; but, in a few instances,[8] all his endeavours have proved unavailing. There is a lamentable degree of avarice and caution in some of the black-letter collectors of our days. On the continent, a literary work is no sooner announced to have been undertaken, than communications are made with the utmost liberality; valuable editions, and even manuscripts, are sent to a great distance; and every one vies to contribute his share to the perfection of the undertaking, for the cause of literature alone. But the envied possessor of an unique quarto in this country too frequently guards his treasure with the vigilance of Argus, and only takes it down to grant a single glance to the curious inquirer, and then to replace it, and enjoy the envious distinction of possessing what no other mortal possesses, regardless of the accidents which may at once deprive literature of the only copy in existence. Fortunately some of the collectors, most illustrious for genius and erudition, adopt a different and more liberal

[8] Philaster and the Maid's Tragedy.

course, disdaining the petty pride and avarice which merely lets the world know that their shelves are adorned with a scarce or unique black-letter book, but, on the contrary, liberally allows the public to enjoy the only real value it contains.

In regulating the text, a considerable difference will be perceived from the edition of 1778; but if the reader will turn to the original copy, very few variations will be found. On perusing the modern editions, we continually meet with lines of ten syllables indeed, but of the most inaccurate modulation, and in the highest degree offensive to the ear; whereas, by a reference to the old copies, the same lines will generally be found to have the true cadence of the ancient dramatic versification, though the verses sometimes exhibit an unusual number of syllables, with other irregularities, which are observable in most of the old plays, and which peculiarly abound in those produced by Fletcher singly. For a still more obvious reason, the prose which occurs in the old copies has been every where restored, excepting in those scenes which evidently resolve themselves into metre without the violent and arbitrary abbreviations, contractions, omissions, and additions, of the editors of 1750, or the boundless irregularity of the state

in which they appear in the edition of 1778, where dactyls, anapests, trochaics and iambics alternate in the most variegated confusion, and where they frequently conclude with an unimportant conjunctive or adjective, contrary to the almost uniform practice of our poets. Many vulgar contractions, which these editors have suffered to remain from the mint of Seward and Sympson,[9] have also been removed.

Another, and a most important desideratum, was the almost total want of stage-directions, and of indications of the place of action, which will be found supplied in the present edition, as well as the division into scenes, which in most of the plays has been hitherto entirely neglected. Indeed, the former editors have almost entirely confined their ambition to the task of writing notes, and introducing their impertinent alterations of the metre, without any attention to those points, so requisite in a critical edition of dramatic writings.

As to the notes, a middle course has been adopted between the profusion which incumbers the pages of the Variorum Shakspeare, and the meagreness of some other editions. In general,

[9] For instance :—h'has, sh'had, within's, in's, y'had, wh'has, &c. &c.

one apposite parallel instance has been adduced to support the explanation of an obsolete word, and particular care has been taken to notice the state of manners during the lifetime of the authors, whenever it varied from our own. This is certainly one of the most useful, as it is one of the most amusing and instructive, duties of an editor.

Short introductions have been prefixed to all the plays, in which every thing which has come to the knowledge of the editor respecting their dramatic history, has been mentioned, and in which he has constantly endeavoured to ascertain, if possible, the date when they were originally produced, and to decide upon the curious question whether they were the work of our united authors, or of Fletcher singly. In this particular, the editor, like all commentators on the old dramatists, must acknowledge his great obligations to the researches of Mr Malone.

As it is peculiarly interesting to trace the sources from which the poets derived the outlines of their plays, abstracts of the novels from which they borrowed their plots have been subjoined, whenever the works containing them could be procured. The valuable publication of Langbaine contains a great many references of this kind; several, however, which he was not

acquainted with, have been discovered by the present editor, and, in some instances, a more ancient source has been pointed out than that industrious collector was aware of.

With regard to the critical observations prefixed to the several dramas, the editor wishes them to be regarded principally as indications to the reader of the more striking beauties and defects of the play he is about to peruse, without any pretensions to more extensive critical enquiries, which, considering the great number of the productions of our poets, would have been out of place, and would have wearied the reader, if he had condescended to afford them a perusal.

A chronological arrangement of the plays would have been very desirable, if it could have been executed with any degree of certainty and authenticity; but, unfortunately, that is entirely out of the power of any editor, without very frequently grounding his hypothesis upon mere guess-work. In the table subjoined to the present prefatory introduction, an endeavour has been made to arrange the plays, as far as our scanty information permits, into some kind of chronological order, and to separate those which were probably the united production of Beau-

mont and Fletcher from those which were written by each without the assistance of the other, or in conjunction with other poets. The arrangement in the first folio was entirely made to serve the convenience of the printer. The plays were sent to press as they could be procured, and, to expedite the work, they were divided into eight unequal portions. The arrangement of the second folio, which has been followed by all the modern editors, is different, but no less unsystematic, and without any attempt at a regular sequence. For these reasons, no arrangement has been attempted in the present edition, excepting that the plays which Fletcher wrote in conjunction with other poets than Beaumont, have been printed together in the two last volumes. So long as we are unable to form a strictly chronological order, it is utterly indifferent how the plays are arranged; and their distribution in such a manner as to equalize the size of the volumes is as specious as any other.

It remains to apprize the reader what additional matter he will meet with in the present volumes. The tragi-comedy of the Faithful Friends is now, for the first time, faithfully printed from the original manuscript, purchased

by the proprietors. Its authenticity is unquestionable; and, though not a work which shows the genius of our poets in the most splendid light, the whole forms an interesting and well-constructed drama, and some of the scenes are of sufficient merit to compensate for the defects of others. The comedy of The Widow, in which Fletcher assisted Ben Jonson and Middleton, has also been added, as well as the poems of Beaumont, which were first printed in 1640, and again in 1653.[1]

[1] The editor's curiosity having been excited by what he conceived might possibly prove a valuable addition to his edition, he used every endeavour to obtain a book entitled, in a bookseller's catalogue, "The Golden Remains of Beaumont and Fletcher," but his exertions proved unavailing till this sheet was going to press, when he was fortunate enough to obtain a copy, and found, what indeed he had strongly suspected, that it is merely the second edition of Beaumont's Poems, printed in the last volume of this work, with a new title-page, well calculated to attract purchasers. The following is the title:—"Poems. The Golden Remains of those so much admired Dramatick Poets, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Gents. Containing, The Hermaphrodite two Sexes, The Remedy and Art of Love, Elegies on the most eminent Persons; with other amorous Sonnets, and conceited Fancies. Together with the Prologues, Epilogues, and Songs, many of which were never before inserted in his printed Plays. The second Edition, enriched with the Addition of other Drolleries by several Wits of the present Times. London, printed for William Hope, at the backside of the Old Exchange. 1660."

I cannot close these introductory pages without acknowledging the very valuable assistance I have received in the course of it from Walter Scott, Esq. who was ever ready to give his opinion upon any passage which, by his permission, the editor submitted to his judgment. Nor must I omit gratefully to acknowledge the kindness of John Philip Kemble, Esq. who, in the most handsome manner, communicated his copy of the second quarto of The Knight of the Burning Pestle, collated throughout by himself with the first edition, which has proved of singular advantage to the work.

The Epitaph beginning—

"Here she lies, whose spotless fame
Invites a stone to learn her name," &c.

is an old MS. note said to be written "On Mrs Ann Littleton, who dy'd 6th February, 1623, and lies buried in the Temple Church." This proves that the epitaph could not be Beaumont's, but it is not unlikely to have been written by Fletcher.

LIST OF THE PLAYS

OF

BEAUMONT & FLETCHER.

IN the following list it has been attempted to specify, on such evidence as has been transmitted to our time, which plays appear to have been written by Beaumont and Fletcher in conjunction, and which were produced by each poet without the assistance of the other, or by the latter in combination with other poets, referring for the evidence on which the conclusions have been grounded to the introductions prefixed to the several plays. The date of the plays has been noticed, wherever it could be made out with any degree of probability, as well as the dates of the old quartos. Wherever no edition is mentioned, the play was first printed in the folio collection of 1647.

Uncertain.

1 The Knight of the Burning Pestle. C. First represented in 1611. Uncertain whether by both or by one. Quartos 1613, 1635.

By Beaumont and Fletcher.

2 Philaster. T. C. Before 1611, probably in 1608. Quartos 1620, 1622, 1628, 1634, 1651.
3 The Maid's Tragedy. T. Before 1611, probably in 1610. Quartos 1619, 1622, 1630, 1638, 1641, 1650, 1661.
4 Four Plays in One. Probably before 1611.
5 King and No King. T. C. Licensed for the stage, 1611. Quartos 1619, 1628, 1639, 1655, 1661.
6 The Honest Man's Fortune. T. C. Licensed 1613.
7 The Coxcomb. C. Acted first 1613.
8 Cupid's Revenge. T. Acted first 1613. Quartos 1625, 1630, 1635.
9 The Scornful Lady. C. Quartos 1616, 1625, 163-, 1639, 1651.
10 Wit without Money. C. Quartos 1639, 1661.
11 Wit at several Weapons. C.
12 The Little French Lawyer. C.
13 The Custom of the Country. T. C. Principally by Fletcher.
14 Bonduca. T.
15 The Laws of Candy. T. C.
16 The Knight of Malta. T.
17 The Faithful Friends T. C. Now first printed from the MS. Entered on the Stationers' Books June 29, 1660.
18 A Right Woman. C. Entered on the Stationers' Books June 29, 1660. Lost.

By Beaumont.

19 The Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn. Produced 20th February, 1612. Quarto. N. D.
20 The History of Mador, King of Great Britain. Entered on the Stationers' Books June 29, 1660. Lost.

By Fletcher.

1. *Before the Death of Beaumont.*

21 The Woman-Hater. C. Produced about 1606, or 1607. Quartos 1607, 1647, 1648.
22 Thierry and Theodoret. T. Quartos 1621, 1648, 1649.
23 The Faithful Shepherdess. P. C. Before 1611. Quartos, N. D., 1629, 1633, 1656, 1661.
24 The Captain. T. C. Acted at Court 20th May, 1613.

2. *After the Death of Beaumont.*

25 The Queen of Corinth. T. C. About 1616.
26 The Loyal Subject. T. C. Licensed in 1618.
27 The Mad Lover. T. C. Before 1618-9.
28 Valentinian. T. Before 1618-9.
29 The False One. T. Conjectured to have been written by Fletcher and Massinger. Probably after 1618-9.
30 Love's Pilgrimage. T. C. Conjectured to have been written by Fletcher and Massinger.
31 The Double Marriage. T. Probably after 1618-9.
32 The Humorous Lieutenant. C. *Ditto.*
33 Nice Valour, or the Passionate Madman. C. *Ditto.*
34 Women Pleased. T. C. *Ditto.*
35 The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed. C.
36 The Chances. C. Before 1621.
37 Monsieur Thomas. C. Before 1621. Quarto 1639.
38 The Island Princess. T. C. Acted at Court 1621.
39 The Pilgrim. C. *Ditto.*
40 The Wildgoose-Chase. C. Folio 1652. *Ditto.*
41 Prophetess. T. C. Licensed May 14, 1622.
42 Sea-Voyage. T. C. Licensed June 22, 1622.
43 Spanish Curate. C. Licensed October 24, 1622.
44 Beggar's Bush. T. C. Acted at Court 1622.
45 Love's Cure, or The Martial Maid. C. Probably produced in 1622 or 1623.
46 The Devil of Dowgate; or Usury put to Use. Licensed

17th October, 1623. Probably lost, if not the same as the Night-Walker. (See the Introduction, p. lv.)

47 The Wandering Lovers. Licensed 6th December, 1623. Lost.

48 A Wife for a Month. T. C. Licensed 27th May, 1624.

49 Rule a Wife and have a Wife. C. Licensed 19th October, 1624.

50 The Fair Maid of the Inn. T. C. Licensed 22d January, 1625-6, after the death of Fletcher.

51 The Noble Gentleman. C. Licensed 3d February, 1625-6, after the death of Fletcher.

52 The Elder Brother. C. Not acted till after the death of Fletcher. Quartos 1637, 1651.

By Fletcher and Shakspeare.

53 The Two Noble Kinsmen. T. Quarto 1634.

54 The History of Cardenio. T .C. Entered on the Stationers' Books September 9, 1653, as written by Shakspeare and Fletcher. Lost.

By Fletcher and Rowley.

25 The Maid of the Mill. T. C. Licensed 29th August, 1623.

By Fletcher, Jonson, and Middleton.

56 The Widow. C. Quarto 1652. Probably written soon after 1615.

By Fletcher, Field, Massinger, and [probably] Dauborne.

57 The Jeweller of Amsterdam, or the Hague. Entered on the Stationers' Books 8th April, 1654. Conjectured to be the play mentioned in Henslowe's Papers, and written between 1612 and 1615.

By Fletcher and Shirley.

58 The Night-Walker, or the Little Thief. C. Quarto 1640. (See the Introduction, p. lv.)

By Fletcher, assisted by unknown Authors.

59 The Bloody Brother, or Rollo, Duke of Normandy. T. Quartos 1639, 1640.

60 The Lovers' Progress. T. Left imperfect by Fletcher, and finished by another poet, probably either Massinger or Shirley.

LIST OF PLAYS

ALTERED, OR PARTLY TAKEN, FROM

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

Wit without Money, with alterations and amendments by some persons of honour, 1708, 4to.

The Scornful Lady—The False Heir, a farce extracted by Kirkman, and printed in Wits, or Sport upon Sport, 1673, 8vo.

The Custom of the Country—Love makes a Man, or the Fop's Fortune, by Colley Cibber, 1700, 4to.

————————————The Stallions, a farce extracted by Kirkman, 1673, 8vo.

Rule a Wife and have a Wife—An alteration for representation ascribed to Garrick, but disowned by him.

————————————The Honey-Moon, by Tobin, part of the plot, 1805, 8vo.

————————————The Equal Match, a farce extracted by Kirkman, 1673, 8vo.

The Beggar's Bush—The Royal Merchant, or the Beggar's Bush, by Henry Norris, 1706, 4to.

————————————The Royal Merchant, an opera, by Thomas Hull, 1768, 8vo.

-The Lame Commonwealth, a farce extracted by Kirkman, 1673, 8vo.

The Spanish Curate—A Farce, acted at Drury-Lane 1749, N. P.

——————The Kiss, by Stephen Clarke, 1811, 8vo. The comic plot.

-The Mock-Testator, a farce extracted by Kirkman, 1673, 8vo

The Humorous Lieutenant—Forced Valour, a farce, by the same, 1673, 8vo

The Faithful Shepherdess—La Fida Pastora, a Latin translation, by Sir Richard Fanshaw, 1658.

Valentinian—Altered by the Earl of Rochester, 1685, 4to.

The Little French Lawyer—A Farce, acted at Drury-Lane 1749. N. P.

——————A Comedy in two acts, altered by Mrs Booth, acted at Covent-Garden 1778. N. P.

The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed—Reduced to an after-piece, 1760.

The Pilgrim—Altered by Sir John Vanbrugh, 1700, 4to.

—————— by J. P. Kemble. Acted at Drury-Lane, 1787, 8vo.

Bonduca—Altered and published by George Powell, 1696, 4to.

——————Altered by George Colman, sen 1778, 8vo.

The Island Princess—An opera by Peter Motteux, 1699.

The Loyal Subject—The Faithful General, a tragedy, by a young lady, 1706, 4to.

——————The Loyal Subject, altered by Mr Sheridan, sen. about 1750. N. P.

Monsieur Thomas—Trick for Trick, or the Debauched Hypocrite, by T. Durfey, 1678, 4to.

The Chances—Altered by the Duke of Buckingham, 1682, 4to.

——————Altered by Garrick, 1773, 8vo.

——————The Landlady, a farce extracted by Kirkman, 1673, 8vo.

The Bloody Brother, or Rollo—Three Merry Boys, by the same, 1673, 8vo.

The Prophetess—An opera, by Betterton, 1690, 4to.

The Sea-Voyage—The Commonwealth of Women, by T. Durfey, 1686, 4to.

A Wife for a Month—Evanthe. T. N. P.
Knight of Malta—Alteration. Performed at Covent-Garden, 1783. N. P.
The Noble Gentleman—A Fool's Preferment, or the Three Dukes of Dunstable, by Durfey, 1688, 4to.
Philaster—The Restoration, or Right will take Place, attributed to the Duke of Buckingham. N. P.
————Philaster, altered by Elkanah Settle, 1695, 4to.
————Altered by George Colman, sen. 1763, 8vo.
————The Clubmen, a farce, extracted by Kirkman, 1673, 8vo.
The Wild-Goose Chase—The Inconstant, by George Farquhar, 1702, 4to.
Wit at Several Weapons—The Wits, by Sir William Davenant, acted 1633, 1636, 4to.
——————————The Rival Fools, by Colley Cibber. N. D. [1709] 4to.
The Maid's Tragedy, with a new fifth act, by Edmund Waller, 1690, 4to.
King and no King—Duke and no Duke, by Nahum Tate, 1685, 4to; a parody.
The Two Noble Kinsmen—The Rivals, attributed to Sir William Davenant, 1668, 4to.
——————————Love and Madness, an alteration by F. G. Waldron. Acted at Richmond, 1779, and at the Hay-Market, 1795. N. P.
The Maid of the Mill, or the Country Revels, a farce. Acted at Covent-Garden, 1750. N. P.

THE

PLAYERS' DEDICATION.

(FOLIO, 1647.)

To the Right Honourable Philip, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery; Baron Herbert of Cardiff and Sherland; Lord Parr and Ross of Kendall; Lord Fitzhugh, Marmyon, and Saint Quintin; Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, and one of his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council; and our singular good Lord.

MY LORD,

THERE is none among all the names of honour that hath more encouraged the legitimate muses of this latter age, than that which is owing to your family; whose coronet shines bright with the native lustre of its own jewels, which, with the access of some beams of Sidney, twisted with their flame, presents a constellation from whose influence all good may be still expected upon wit and learning.

At this truth we rejoice, but yet aloof, and in

our own valley; for we dare not approach with any capacity in ourselves to apply your smile, since we have only preserved, as trustees to the ashes of the authors, what we exhibit to your honour, it being no more our own than those imperial crowns and garlands were the soldiers' who were honourably designed for their conveyance before the triumpher to the capitol.

But directed by the example of some, who once steered in our quality, and so fortunately aspired to choose your honour, joined with your (now glorified) brother, patrons to the flowing compositions of the then expired sweet swan of Avon, Shakspeare;[1] and since, more particularly bound to your lordship's most constant and diffusive goodness, from which we did for many calm years derive a subsistence to ourselves, and protection to the scene (now withered and condemned, as we fear, to a long winter and sterility) we have presumed to offer to yourself what before was never printed of these authors.

Had they been less than all the treasure we had contracted in the whole age of poesy (some few poems of their own excepted, which, already published, command their entertainment with all lovers of art and language) or were they not the most justly admired and beloved pieces of wit and the world, we should have taught ourselves a less ambition.

Be pleased to accept this humble tender of our duties; and till we fail in our obedience to all your

[1] *The example of some, &c.*] *i. e.* Heminge and Condell, who, in 1623, published the first edition of Shakspeare's Works. They dedicated them to this same nobleman, then Earl of Montgomery, and his elder brother, William Earl of Pembroke.—Ed. 1778.

commands, vouchsafe we may be known by the cognizance and character of,

My Lord,

Your Honour's most bounden,

John Lowin,	Joseph Taylor,
Richard Robinson,	Robert Benfeild,
Eylærd Swanston,	Thomas Pollard,
Hugh Clearke,	William Allen,
Stephen Hammerton,	Theophilus Byrd.

TO

THE READER.

(FOLIO, 1647.)

POETRY is the child of nature, which, regulated and made beautiful by art, presenteth the most harmonious of all other compositions; among which (if we rightly consider) the dramatical is the most absolute, in regard of those transcendent abilities which should wait upon the composer; who must have more than the instruction of libraries (which of itself is but a cold contemplative knowledge,) there being required in him a soul miraculously knowing and conversing with all mankind, enabling him to express not only the phlegm and folly of thick-skinned men, but the strength and maturity of the wise, the air and insinuations of the court, the discipline and resolution of the soldier, the virtues and passions of every noble condition, nay, the counsels and characters of the greatest princes.

This, you will say, is a vast comprehension, and hath not happened in many ages. Be it then remembered, to the glory of our own, that all these are demonstrative and met in Beaumont and Fletcher, whom but to mention is to throw a cloud upon all former names, and benight posterity; this

book being, without flattery, the greatest monument of the scene that time and humanity have produced, and must live, not only the crown and sole reputation of our own, but the stain of all other nations and languages: for, it may be boldly averred, not one indiscretion hath branded this paper in all the lines, this being the authentic wit that made Blackfriars an academy, where the three hours spectacle, while Beaumont and Fletcher were presented, was usually of more advantage to the hopeful young heir, than a costly, dangerous, foreign travel, with the assistance of a governing monsieur or signor to boot; and it cannot be denied but that the young spirits of the time, whose birth and quality made them impatient of the sourer ways of education, have, from the attentive hearing these pieces, got ground in point of wit and carriage of the most severely-employed students, while these recreations were digested into rules, and the very pleasure did edify. How many passable discoursing dining wits stand yet in good credit, upon the bare stock of two or three of these single scenes!

And now, reader, in this tragical age, where the theatre hath been so much out-acted, congratulate thy own happiness, that, in this silence of the stage, thou hast a liberty to read these inimitable plays, to dwell and converse in these immortal groves which were only shewed our fathers in a conjuring-glass, as suddenly removed as represented; the landscape is now brought home by this optic, and the press, though too pregnant before, shall be now looked upon as greatest benefactor to Englishmen, that must acknowledge all the felicity of wit and words to this derivation.

You may here find passions raised to that excellent pitch, and by such insinuating degrees, that

you shall not choose but consent, and go along with them, finding yourself at last grown insensibly the very same person you read; and then stand admiring the subtile tracks of your engagement. Fall on a scene of love, and you will never believe the writers could have the least room left in their souls for another passion; peruse a scene of manly rage, and you would swear they cannot be expressed by the same hands; but both are so excellently wrought, you must confess none but the same hands could work them.

Would thy melancholy have a cure? thou shalt laugh at Democritus himself; and, but reading one piece of this comic variety, find thy exalted fancy in Elysium; and, when thou art sick of this cure, (for the excess of delight may too much dilate thy soul) thou shalt meet almost in every leaf a soft purling passion or spring of sorrow, so powerfully wrought high by the tears of innocence, and wronged lovers, it shall persuade thy eyes to weep into the stream, and yet smile when they contribute to their own ruins.

Infinitely more might be said of these rare copies; but let the ingenuous reader[a] peruse them, and he will find them so able to speak their own worth, that they need not come into the world with a trumpet, since any one of these incomparable pieces, well understood, will prove a preface to the rest; and if the reader can taste the best wit ever trod our English stage, he will be forced himself to become a breathing panegyric to them all.

Not to detain or prepare thee longer, be as capricious and sick-brained as ignorance and malice

[a] Ingenuous *reader.*] In Coles's Dict. 1677, it is remarked, "*Ingenuous* and *ingenious* are too often confounded."—Ed. 1778.

can make thee, here thou art rectified; or be as healthful as the inward calm of an honest heart, learning, and temper can state thy disposition, yet this book may be thy fortunate concernment and companion

It is not so remote in time but very many gentlemen may remember these authors; and some, familiar in their conversation, deliver them upon every pleasant occasion so fluent, to talk a comedy. He must be a bold man that dares undertake to write their lives: what I have to say is, we have the precious remains; and as the wisest contemporaries acknowledge they lived a miracle, I am very confident this volume cannot die without one.

What more specially concerns these authors and their works, is told thee by another hand, in the following epistle of the Stationer to the Readers.

Farewell: Read, and fear not thine own understanding; this book will create a clear one in thee: and when thou hast considered thy purchase, thou wilt call the price of it a charity to thyself; and, at the same time, forgive

Thy friend,

And these authors' humble admirer,

JAMES SHIRLEY.[3]

[3] *James Shirley.*] It is much to be regretted that this ingenious gentleman did nothing more to the first folio than writing the preface; we should not then so justly lament the incorrectness of that edition.—Ed. 1778.

That Shirley should have given us a critically correct edition of our authors it is idle to wish, as such a thing was almost unknown at the time. The only tolerably correct edition of a dramatic work then was Ben Jonson's collection of his own works: It is much more to be regretted that Shirley should have been deterred, by his modesty, from writing the lives of our authors.

THE

STATIONER TO THE READERS.

(FOLIO, 1647.)

GENTLEMEN,

BEFORE you engage further, be pleased to take notice of these particulars: You have here a new book; I can speak it clearly; for of all this large volume of comedies and tragedies, not one, till now, was ever printed before. A collection of plays is commonly but a new impression, the scattered pieces which were printed single being then only re-published together: 'Tis otherwise here.

Next, as it is all new, so here is not any thing spurious or imposed: I had the originals from such as received them from the authors themselves; by those, and none other, I publish this edition.

And as here is nothing but what is genuine and theirs, so you will find here are no omissions; you have not only all that I could get, but all that you must ever expect. For, besides those which were formerly printed, there is not any piece written by

these authors, either jointly or severally, but what are now published to the world in this volume.[4] One only play I must except (for I mean to deal openly;) it is a comedy called The Wild-Goose Chase,[5] which hath been long lost, and I fear irrecoverable; for a person of quality borrowed it from the actors many years since, and, by the negligence of a servant, it was never returned; therefore now I put up this *si quis*, that whosoever hereafter happily meets with it shall be thankfully satisfied if he please to send it home.

Some plays, you know, written by these authors, were heretofore printed; I thought not convenient to mix them with this volume, which of itself is entirely new. And, indeed, it would have rendered the book so voluminous, that ladies and gentlewomen would have found it scarce manageable, who, in works of this nature, must first be remembered. Besides, I considered those former pieces had been so long printed and reprinted, that many gentlemen were already furnished; and I would have none say they pay twice for the same book.

One thing I must answer before it be objected; 'tis this: When these comedies and tragedies were presented on the stage, the actors omitted some scenes and passages, with the authors' consent, as occasion led them; and when private friends desired a copy, they then, and justly too, transcribed what they acted: but now you have both all that

[4] The stationer, for the credit of his book, makes an assertion in this place which is not borne out by the fact, as we know, from unquestionable authority, that several plays are lost, probably irrecoverably.

[5] *The Wild-Goose Chase.*] This comedy, in the year 1652, was published in folio by Lowin and Taylor, two of the players, with a "Dedication to the Honour'd Few Lovers of Dramatick Poesie," and several commendatory verses annexed.—Ed. 1778.

was acted, and all that was not; even the perfect full originals, without the least mutilation; so that, were the authors living, and sure they can never die, they themselves would challenge neither more nor less than what is here published; this volume being now so complete and finished, that the reader must expect no future alterations.

For little errors committed by the printer, it is the fashion to ask pardon, and as much in fashion to take no notice of him that asks it; but in this also I have done my endeavour. 'Twere vain to mention the chargeableness of this work; for those who owned the manuscripts too well knew their value to make a cheap estimate of any of these pieces; and though another joined with me in the purchase and printing, yet the care and pains was wholly mine, which I found to be more than you will easily imagine, unless you knew into how many hands the originals were dispersed: they are all now happily met in this book, having escaped these public troubles, free and unmangled. Heretofore, when gentlemen desired but a copy of any of these plays, the meanest piece here, (if any may be called mean where every one is best) cost them more than four times the price you pay for the whole volume.

I should scarce have adventured in these slippery times on such a work as this, if knowing persons had not generally assured me that these authors were the most unquestionable wits this kingdom hath afforded. Mr Beaumont was ever acknowledged a man of a most strong and searching brain, and, his years considered, the most judicious wit these later ages have produced; he died young, for (which was an invaluable loss to this nation) he left the world when he was not full thirty years old. Mr Fletcher survived, and lived till almost fifty, whereof the world now enjoys the benefit. It

was once in my thoughts to have printed Mr Fletcher's works by themselves,[6] because single and alone he would make a just volume; but since never parted while they lived, I conceived it not equitable to separate their ashes.

It becomes not me to say, though it be a known truth, that these authors had not only high unexpressible gifts of nature, but also excellent acquired parts, being furnished with arts and sciences by that liberal education they had at the university, which, sure, is the best place to make a great wit understand itself; this their works will soon make evident. I was very ambitious to have got Mr Beaumont's picture, but could not possibly, though I spared no inquiry in those noble families whence he was descended, as also among those gentlemen that were his acquaintance when he was of the Inner-Temple; the best pictures, and those most like him, you will find in this volume. This figure of Mr Fletcher was cut by several original pieces, which his friends lent me; but withal they tell me, that his unimitable soul did shine through his countenance in such air and spirit, that the painters confessed it was not easy to express him: As much as could be you have here, and the graver hath done his part.

Whatever I have seen of Mr Fletcher's own hand is free from interlining; and his friends affirm he never writ any one thing twice.[7] It seems

[6] *Fletcher's works by themselves.*] If Mr Moseley *could* have made this separation, it is greatly to be regretted that he left us no intimation which plays were written by Fletcher alone.—Ed. 1778.

There is no doubt that he could have done what he asserts he had it in contemplation to do.

[7] *He never writ any one thing twice.*] May we not suppose this to have been a sort of common-place compliment? but surely it

he had that rare felicity to prepare and perfect all first in his own brain; to shape and attire his notions, to add or lop off, before he committed one word to writing, and never touched pen till all was to stand as firm and immutable as if engraven in brass or marble. But I keep you too long from those friends of his whom 'tis fitter for you to read;[8] only accept of the honest endeavours of

One that is a servant to you all,

HUMPHREY MOSELEY.

At the Prince's Arms, in 's Church-Yard, Feb. the 14th, 1646.

is a very injudicious one. A similar assertion, applied to Shakspeare, has afforded much conversation in the literary world.—Ed. 1778.

8 —— *those friends of his whom 'tis fitter for you to read.*] Alluding to the commendatory verses which follow next in the first folio.

THE

BOOKSELLERS TO THE READER.

(FOLIO, 1679.)

COURTEOUS READER,

THE first edition of these plays in this volume having found that acceptance as to give us encouragement to make a second impression, we were very desirous they might come forth as correct as might be: and we were very opportunely informed of a copy which an ingenious and worthy gentleman had taken the pains, or rather the pleasure, to read over; wherein he had all along corrected[9] several faults, some very gross, which had crept in by the frequent imprinting of them. His corrections were the more to be valued, because he had an intimacy with both our authors, and had been a spectator of most of them when they were acted in their lifetime. This, therefore, we resolved to purchase at any rate, and, accordingly, with no small cost, obtained it. From the same hand

[9] *He had all along corrected*, &c.] Notwithstanding this boast, in many plays, the first folio is more correct than the second.—Ed. 1778.

also we received several prologues and epilogues, with the songs appertaining to each play,[1] which were not in the former edition, but are now inserted in their proper places. Besides, in this edition you have the addition of no fewer than seventeen plays more than were in the former, which we have taken the pains and care to collect, and print out of quarto, in this volume, which, for distinction sake, are marked with a star in the catalogue of them facing the first page of the book. And whereas in several of the plays there were wanting the names of the persons represented therein, in this edition you have them all prefixed, with their qualities, which will be a great ease to the reader. Thus, every way perfect and complete, have you all, both tragedies and comedies, that were ever writ by our authors, a pair of the greatest wits and most ingenious poets of their age; from whose worth we should but detract by our most studied commendations.

If our care and endeavours to do our authors right, in an incorrupt and genuine edition of their works, and thereby to gratify and oblige the reader, be but requited with a suitable entertainment, we should be encouraged to bring Ben Jonson's two volumes into one, and publish them in this form, and also to reprint old Shakspeare: Both which are designed by

Yours,

Ready to serve you,

JOHN MARTYN,
HENRY HERRINGMAN,
RICHARD MARIOT.

[1] Several of these had been previously printed in Beaumont's Poems.

MR SEWARD'S PREFACE.

(OCTAVO, 1750.)

THE public at length receives a new edition of the two great poets, who, with a fate in each case alike unjust, were extolled for near a century after their deaths, as equals, rivals, nay, superiors to the immortal Shakspeare; but, in the present age, have been depressed beneath the smooth-polished enervate issue of the modern drama. And as their fame has been so different with respect to other poets, so has it varied also between themselves. Fletcher was a while supposed unable to rise to any height of eminence, had not Beaumont's stronger arm bore him upwards. Yet no sooner had he lost that aid, and demonstrated that it was delight and love, not necessity, which made him soar abreast with his amiable friend, but the still-injurious world began to strip the plumes from Beaumont, and to dress Fletcher in the whole fame,

[a] Some of Seward's notes, containing proposals for amending passages in Shakspeare and our authors, have been omitted in the present edition.

leaving to the former nothing but the mere pruning of Fletcher's luxuriant wit, the *limæ labor*, the plummet, and the rule, but neither the plan, materials, composition, or ornaments. This is directly asserted in Mr Cartwright's Commendatory Poem on Fletcher:

"Who therefore wisely did submit each birth
To knowing Beaumont ere it did come forth,
Working again until he said, 'twas fit,
And made him the sobriety of his wit.
Though thus he call'd his judge into his fame,
And for that aid allow'd him half the name," &c.
See Cartwright's Poem, below.

Mr Harris, in his Commendatory Poem, makes Beaumont a mere dead weight hanging on the boughs of Fletcher's palm:

———" When thou didst sit
But as a joint commissioner in wit;
When it had plummets hung on to suppress
Its too-luxuriant growing mightiness.
Till as that tree, which scorns to be kept down,
Thou grew'st to govern the whole stage alone."

I believe this extremely injurious to Beaumont; but as the opinion, or something like it, has lived for ages, and is frequent at this day, it is time at length to restore Beaumont to the full rank of fellowship which he possessed when living, and to fix the standard of their respective merits, before we shew the degree in which their united fame ought to be placed on the British theatre.

Mr Cartwright and Mr Harris wrote thirty years after Beaumont's death, and twenty after Fletcher's; and none of the numerous contemporary poems, published with theirs before the first folio edition of our authors, degrade Beaumont so very

low as these. Sir John Berkenhead allows him a full moiety of the fame, but seems to think his genius more turned to grave sublimity than to sprightliness of imagination.

"Fletcher's keen *treble*, and deep Beaumont's *base*."

Thus has this line of Sir John's been hitherto read and understood, but its authenticity in this light will be disputed when we come to that poem, and the justness of the character at present. We have among the Commendatory Poems one of Mr Earle's, wrote immediately after Beaumont's death, and ten years before Fletcher's. He seems to have been an acquaintance as well as contemporary, and his testimony ought to have much more weight than all the traditional opinions of those who wrote thirty years after.[a] He ascribes to Beaumont three first-rate plays, The Maid's Tragedy, Philaster, and The King and no King. The first of these has a grave sublimity, mingled with more horror and fury than are frequently seen among the gay-spirited scenes of Fletcher, and probably gave rise to the report of Beaumont's deep base. But there is scarce a more lively-spirited character in all their plays than Philaster; and I believe Beaumont aimed at drawing a Hamlet racked with Othello's love and jealousy. The King and no King too is extremely spirited in all its characters; Arbaces holds up a mirror to all men of virtuous principles but violent passions: hence he is as it were at once magnanimity and pride, patience and fury, gentleness and rigour, chastity and incest, and is one of the finest mix-

[a] From the Introduction, (p. xcii.) it will be seen that it was Bishop Earle himself who raised the report which Seward is endeavouring to refute.

tures of virtues and vices that any poet has drawn, except the Hotspur of Shakspeare, and the *impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer*, of Homer.—For a defence of this character against Mr Rymer's cavils, see the concluding note on King and no King.[3] Bessus, and his two Swordsmen, in this play, are infinitely the liveliest comic characters of mere bragging cowards which we have in our language; and if they do not upon the whole equal the extensive and inimitable humours of Falstaff and his companions, they leave all other characters of the same species, even Shakspeare's own Parolles, far behind them.

Our excellent Congreve has consolidated the two Swordsmen to form his Captain Bluff. And be it his honour to have imitated so well, though he is far from reaching the originals. Beaumont lived in the age of duelling upon every slight punctilio. Congreve wrote his Bluff in the Flanders war: times when a braggart was the most ridiculous of all characters; and so far was Beaumont from the supposed grave solemn tragic poet only, that comic humour, particularly in drawing cowardice, seems his peculiar talent. For the spirit of Bessus *paulum mutatus*, changed only so as to give a proper novelty of character, appears again in The Nice Valour, or Passionate Madman. The traces of the same hand, so strongly marked in this play, strike a new light upon Beaumont's character. For, in a letter to Jonson, printed at the end of The Nice Valour, vol. X.[4] he speaks of himself not as a mere corrector of other works, but as a poet of acknowledged eminence; and of The

[3] See the introduction to that play, vol. XII.

[4] The poem alluded to will be found among Beaumont's Poems, vol. XIV. p. 432.

Nice Valour, and some other comedy, which the publisher of the second folio[5] took for the Woman-Hater, as his plays, which must be understood indeed as chiefly his, not excluding Fletcher's as-

[5] The publishers of the second folio added several genuine songs, prologues, epilogues, and some lines in particular plays not contained in any former edition, which, by the account given, they perhaps got from either an old actor, or a playhouse prompter; they say from a gentleman who had been intimate with both the authors; they probably were directed by lights received from him, to place the Woman-Hater directly before The Nice Valour, and to make this the other play which Beaumont claims. The Little French Lawyer, and The Knight of the Burning Pestle, are most certainly two plays which Beaumont had a large share in; for his hand is very visible in the extreme droll character of The French Lawyer, who runs *duello-mad;* the prologue talks of the authors in the plural number, and the strain of high burlesque appears very similar in the two characters of Lazarillo in The Woman-Hater, and Ralpho in The Burning Pestle. Beaumont's name, too, is put first in the title-page of the first quarto of this last play, published a few years after Fletcher's death.—*Seward.*

No name is mentioned in the first quartos of either of these plays, which both appeared before the death of either of our poets. The reasons which Seward assigns for attributing Nice Valour and The Woman-Hater to Beaumont, he subjoined to the verses of the latter on The Faithful Shepherdess. As that poem has now been restored to its original situation before that drama, Seward's note, with Mr Nichols's very satisfactory answer, are inserted in this place. It is on this line in the poem referred to:

When Nature and his full thoughts bid him write.

Seward proceeds thus:
Here, says the judicious writer of Beaumont's life in the General Dictionary, Beaumont evidently shews that he was fired with that violent passion for writing which the poets very justly call inspiration, and he makes this one proof of Beaumont's not being a mere corrector of Fletcher's works, but a joint author. As I think I have collected some stronger proofs of this, both external and internal, than have been yet produced, and as I have already built the former part of my preface upon these proofs, I shall place them before the reader in the next note, just as they occurred to me.

sistance. Now these two plays totally differ in their manner from all that Fletcher wrote alone: They consist not of characters from real life, as Fletcher and Shakspeare draw theirs, but of pas-

Both to be read, and censured of by those
Whose very reading makes verse senseless prose.

Here we see a consciousness of the poet's own merit, and an indignation at the stupidity of the age he lived in, which seem to have been the characteristics of Beaumont and Jonson. This will appear stronger in the process of this note, in which I shall endeavour to prove what share Beaumont had in the composition of the following plays. I have already mentioned that Mr Earle's testimony, wrote immediately after Beaumont's death, is decisive as to Beaumont's having the largest share in the composition of The Maid's Tragedy, Philaster, and the King and no King; and that Bessus, in particular, was drawn by him. (See Mr Earle's poem, below.) This was undoubtedly the reason why Beaumont's name is put first in the old quartos of these plays, published by the players after Beaumont's death, but before Fletcher's. For, would the players have complimented the dead at the expence of their living friend, patron, and supporter? After two such proofs as these, general expressions, or even traditional opinions of the panegyric writers thirty years after, are lighter than vanity itself. From these plays no distinction of hands between Beaumont and Fletcher was discerned, nor any suspicion of such a distinction occurred till I came to The Woman-Hater, vol. X., which appeared visibly to have more of Jonson's manner than any play I had before met with, which I mentioned at page 64 on that play, when deceived, as Langbaine had been, by the first quarto, (published several years after the death of both the authors) I verily thought that it had been Fletcher's only. I had not then attended to the poem of Beaumont's to Jonson, published at the end of The Nice Valour, and Woman-Hater, by the second folio. If the reader will consult that poem, he will find that it was sent from the country to Jonson, with two of the precedent comedies, not then finished, but which Beaumont claims as his own:

Ben, when these scenes are perfect, we'll taste wine,
I'll drink thy muse's health, thou shalt quaff mine.

It is plain that they had been his amusement during a summer

sions and humours personized, as cowardice in Lapet, nice honour in Shamont, the madness of different passions in the Madman, the love of nice eating in Lazarillo, the hate of women in Gondarino.

vacation in the country, when he had no companion but his muse to entertain him; for all the former part of the poem is a description of the execrable wine, and the more execrable company, which he was forced to endure. Fletcher therefore could not be with him. So that there are certainly two comedies which properly belong to Beaumont only, which therefore we must endeavour to find out. The verses tell us that he acknowledged all he had to be owing to Jonson; there is no doubt, therefore, of his imitating Jonson's manner in these comedies. Shirley, in the first folio, and the publisher of the second folio, both agree in making The Nice Valour one of these plays: now this play is extremely in Jonson's manner, as is observed in the beginning of the preface, and in a note on the verses to Jonson, (vol. XIV. p. 432.) The prologue of this play has no weight, being wrote several years after it; but the epilogue was evidently wrote in the author's lifetime, probably either by the author himself, or else by his friend Jonson: for it is extremely like Jonson in his prologues and epilogues, who generally lets his audience know that if they did not admire him it was their faults, not his. So this epilogue makes the author declare—

the play is good,
He says, he[1] knows it, if well understood.

How unlike is this to Fletcher and Shakspeare's manner, who, when they join together in The Two Noble Kinsmen, are even modesty itself? See the prologue and epilogue to that play, vol. XIII. The latter has these lines:

And yet mistake me not, I am not bold,
We've no such cause. If the tale we have told
(For 'tis no other) any way content,
(For to that honest purpose it was meant)
We have our end; and ye shall have ere long,
I dare say, many a better to prolong
Your old loves to us.——

I hope the reader will now see sufficient grounds to believe that

[1] The author.

This is Jonson's manner, to whom, in the letter quoted above, Beaumont indeed acknowledges that he owed it.

The Nice Valour was Beaumont's play: It is not demonstration, but it is a high degree of probability. But still the distinction of manner from Fletcher, in personizing the passions, and not drawing from real life, spoke of above, will not follow if Fletcher wrote The Woman-Hater, as the first edition in quarto of that play asserts; but the second contradicts it, and puts Beaumont's name first in the title-page, and claims its changes from the author's manuscript. The publisher of the second folio follows the second quarto, and makes it one of the plays referred to in Beaumont's verses. The prologue appears to be wrote by the author himself, speaks of himself in the singular number, and shews great confidence in the goodness of the play, and an utter contempt of twopenny gallery judges. Here Beaumont's hand therefore seemed visible. I therefore began to recollect which of the foregoing plays most resembled this, to see what light might be gained from them; the first that occurred was The Knight of the Burning Pestle, which is all burlesque sublime, as Lazarillo's character in The Woman-Hater is throughout. Here all the editions give the Knight to Beaumont and Fletcher; this therefore is clear, and the prologue of that play[2] is in style and sentiments so exactly like that of The Woman-Hater, that the same hand undoubtedly drew both. Believing, therefore, that The Nice Valour was Beaumont's only, and that he had at least the greatest share of The Woman-Hater and The Knight of the Burning Pestle, I proceeded to other plays, and, first, to The Little French Lawyer, where La Writ runs fighting mad, just as Lazarillo had run eating mad, The Knight of the Burning Pestle romance mad, Chamont in The Nice Valour, honour mad, &c. This is what our old English writers often distinguish by the name of humour. The style too of La Writ, like Lazarillo's and the Knight's, is often the burlesque sublime. Here I found the prologue speaking of the authors in the plural number, *i. e.* Beaumont and Fletcher. There is a good deal of the same humour in The Scornful Lady, wrote by Beaumont and Fletcher, as all the quartos declare. The publishers of the General Dictionary, whose accuracy deserves the highest applause, have helped me to another play, The Martial Maid, in which Beaumont had a share,

[2] The prologue which Seward speaks of is taken verbatim from a play of Lilly's, which certainly lessens the confidence we should wish to place in his discernment.

"Fate, once again
Bring me to thee, who canst make smooth and plain
The way of knowledge for me, and then I,
Who have no good but in thy company,
Protest it will my greatest comfort be
To acknowledge all I have to flow from thee.
Ben, when these scenes are perfect we'll taste wine:
I'll drink thy muse's health, thou shalt quaff mine."

Does Jonson (who is said constantly to have consulted Beaumont, and to have paid the greatest de-

and Jonson's manner of characterising is very visible; an effeminate youth and a masculine young lady are both reformed by love, like Jonson's Every Man in his Humour, and Every Man out of his Humour. Wit without Money, and The Custom of the Country, which have Beaumont's name first in all the editions, have something of the same hand, particularly in Valentine's extravagant contempt of money, and do great honour to Beaumont, as both are excellent plays, and the first an incomparable one. Shirley supposes The Humorous Lieutenant to be one of the plays referred to by Beaumont's verses to Jonson; and the publisher of Beaumont's Poems, which came out about five years after Shirley's folio of our authors' plays, has wrote under that poem The Maid in the Mill. This, I suppose, was a marginal note of somebody who believed Beaumont to have been a joint author in that play: It seems highly probable that he was so in both these plays, as the Lieutenant and Bustapha are both strong caricatures, and much in Beaumont's manner. The False One mentions the authors in the plural number; and I believe Beaumont chiefly drew the character of Septimius, which gives name to the play; but whatever share he had in that play, it does him great honour. Cupid's Revenge, which all the editions ascribe to Beaumont and Fletcher, is only spoiled from being a very good tragedy by a ridiculous mixture of machinery; this play, The Noble Gentleman, and The Coxcomb, are all that remain which have any sort of external evidence, which I know, of Beaumont's being a joint author, and these I build nothing upon. There are two others that partake of his manner, which, for that reason only, I suspect,—The Spanish Curate, and The Laws of Candy; the latter of which extremely resembles the King and no King in its principal characters. But we need not rest upon mere conjectures, since Beaumont's share of The Maid's Tragedy, Philaster, and the King and no King, give him a full right to share equally with Fletcher the fame of a tragic poet; and Wit without

ference to his judgment) does he, I say, treat him in his answer as a mere critic, and judge of others' works only? No, but as an eminent poet, whom he loved with a zeal enough to kindle a love to his

Money, The Nice Valour, and The Little French Lawyer, raise his character equally high in comedy.—*Seward.*

Mr Seward has been exceedingly elaborate in this disquisition; wherein, we apprehend, no one meets conviction, though the writer seems to be himself so perfectly satisfied both with the internal and external evidence. With respect to the first, each reader will judge for himself; in the second, he appears to be uncommonly erroneous.

Seward speaks of the first quarto of The Woman-Hater; the first quarto he never saw. He says it was published several years after the death of both authors; it was published in the lifetime of both, in the year 1607. This copy is indeed very scarce; and had not Mr Garrick's invaluable library been as easy as most others are difficult of access, a perusal of that edition would not, perhaps, have been obtained.

The first quarto was printed, as before observed, in 1607, without any author's name prefixed; but in Mr Garrick's copy has been wrote, by "John Fletcher," through which name a pen has been run, and "Francis Beamont" wrote over the line; even this interlineation appears to be very old. The second quarto appeared in 1648, the title whereof mentions Fletcher singly; and the third in 1649, which has both names. The third, however, seems to be merely the second, with a new title-page, and the additions of the auxiliary title, The Hungry Courtier, a Drama; and D'Avenant's prologue for the revival.

Great stress is also laid by Seward on the situation of Beaumont's Letter to Jonson; but this situation is evidently a mere casualty of the press. To expedite the printing, the first folio was divided into eight different portions, as the printer's directory letters for the bookbinder, and the numeration of the pages, evince.

The plays alloted for the third portion were, Chances, Loyal Subject, Laws of Candy, Lovers' Progress, Island Princess, Humorous Lieutenant, and Nice Valour: These not making perfect sheets, the editor, to avoid leaving a blank leaf in the body of the book, there inserted this letter; and hence, undoubtedly, originated the situation of the poem, which ought, did its title deserve attention, to have been placed at the end of the whole work; for, had any specification been intended, we should not

memory, as long as poetry delights the understanding, or friendship warms the heart:—

"How do I love thee, Beaumont, and thy muse,
That unto me dost such religion use!
How I do fear myself, that am not worth
The least indulgent thought thy pen drops forth!"

have had the vague expression, "two of the precedent," but "the two precedent comedies."

Seward says, Shirley supposes the Humorous Lieutenant to be one of the plays referred to by the verses: Shirley thought nothing of the matter, knew nothing of the arrangement, did nothing but write the preface: It were unjust to believe he did more.—It is not always easy to discover Seward's meaning; but he seems, however, to have distrusted Shirley's supposition, and to have relied on the subsequent editor, by saying the verses were "published at the end of the Nice Valour, and Woman Hater, in the second folio." This proves nothing; that editor continued them with the play to which he found them annexed.

The title to these verses runs, "Mr Francis Beaumont's Letter to Ben Jonson, written before he and Mr Fletcher came to London, with two of the precedent Comedies, then not finished, which deferred their merry Meetings at the Mermaid." If this title and the situation afford proof of any kind, it will be directly opposite to Seward's opinion: First, as the title mentions "two of the precedent comedies," The Woman-Hater could not be one, having no place in the first folio. Secondly, Seward says, "Fletcher could not be with Beaumont;" but what says the title, "Written before he AND Master Fletcher came, &c." And, thirdly, if Beaumont AND Fletcher were together, Nice Valour and the Humorous Lieutenant must be looked on as joint productions.

But, besides the title and situation failing to prove which the comedies were, the poem itself affords no proof that Beaumont was then writing any play at all. The words

When these scenes are perfect,

are all which can lead to such a supposition; and may we not understand those words to mean only, "When I change the scene," or, "when the time for my stay here is completed?" with this sense of the word *perfect* every reader of old books must be acquainted. Whether this explanation is admitted or not, it at least seems clear that no such external evidence, as Seward supposes, is deducible from either the title or situation of the poem in question.—*J. N.*

See the remainder of this Poem III. of the Commendatory Verses;[6] see also the first of these poems by Beaumont himself, the close of which will sufficiently confirm both his vigour of imagination and sprightliness of humour. Having thus, we hope, dispersed the cloud that for ages has darkened Beaumont's fame, let it again shine in full lustre, *Britanniæ sidus alterum et decus gemellum.* And let us now examine the order and magnitude of this poetic constellation, and view the joint characters of Beaumont and Fletcher.

These authors are in a direct mean between Shakspeare and Jonson; they do not reach the amazing rapidity and immortal flights of the former, but they soar with more ease and to nobler heights than the latter; they have less of the *os magna sonans*, the *vivida vis animi*, the noble enthusiasm, the muse of fire, the terrible graces of Shakspeare, but they have much more of all these than Jonson. On the other hand, in literature they much excel the former, and are excelled by the latter; and therefore they are more regular in their plots and more correct in their sentiments and diction than Shakspeare, but less so than Jonson. Thus far Beaumont and Fletcher are one; but, as hinted above, in this they differ; Beaumont studied and followed Jonson's manner, personized the passions, and drew Nature in her extremes; Fletcher followed Shakspeare and Nature in her usual dress (this distinction only holds with regard to their comic works, for in tragedies they all chiefly paint from real life.) Which of these

[6] In the present edition Jonson's poem is ranged among the commendatory poems in the place it occupies in the first folio; and the poem of Beaumont, alluded to by Seward, will be found prefixed to the Faithful Shepherdess, to which it refers, vol iv. p. 7.

manners is most excellent may be difficult to say; the former seems most striking, the latter more pleasing, the former shews vice and folly in the most ridiculous lights, the latter more fully shews each man himself, and unlocks the inmost recesses of the heart.

Great are the names of the various masters who followed the one and the other manner. Jonson, Beaumont, and Moliere list on one side; Terence, Shakspeare, and Fletcher on the other.

But to return to our duumvirate, between whom two other small differences are observable. Beaumont, as appears by various testimonies, and chiefly by his own letter prefixed to the old folio edition of Chaucer,[7] was a hard student; and, for one whom the world lost before he was thirty, had a surprising compass of literature: Fletcher was a polite rather than a deep scholar, and conversed with men at least as much as with books. Hence the gay sprightliness and natural ease of his young gentlemen are allowed to be inimitable; in these he has been preferred by judges of candour even to Shakspeare himself. If Beaumont does not equal him in this, yet, being by his fortune conversant also in high life (the son of a judge, as the other of a bishop) he is in this too *alter ab illo*, a good second, and almost a second self, as Philaster, Amintor, Bacurius in the three first plays, Count Valore, Oriana, Cleremont, Valentine, and others evidently shew.

This small difference observed, another appears by no means similar to it: Beaumont, we said, chiefly studied books and Jonson; Fletcher, nature and Shakspeare, yet so far was the first from following

[7] The letter referred to was not written by our author. See the Introduction, p. viii.

his friend and master in his frequent close and almost servile imitations of the ancient classics, that he seems to have had a much greater confidence in the fertility and richness of his own imagination than even Fletcher himself: The latter, in his masterpiece, The Faithful Shepherdess, frequently imitates Theocritus and Virgil; in Rollo has taken whole scenes from Seneca, and almost whole acts from Lucan in the False One. I do not blame him for this; his imitations have not the stiffness, which sometimes appears (though not often) in Jonson, but breathe the free and full air of originals; and accordingly Rollo[8] and The False One are two of Fletcher's first-rate plays. But Beaumont, I believe, never condescended to translate and rarely to imitate; however largely he was supplied with classic streams, from his own urn all flows pure and untinctured. Here the two friends change places: Beaumont rises in merit towards Shakspeare, and Fletcher descends towards Jonson.

Having thus seen the features of these twins of poetry greatly resembling yet still distinct from each other, let us conclude that all reports which separate and lessen the fame of either of them are ill-grounded and false, that they were, as Sir John Berkenhead calls them, two full congenial souls, or, as either Fletcher himself, or his still greater col-

[8] Rollo is in the first edition in quarto ascribed to Fletcher alone; The False One is one of those plays that is more dubious as to its authors. The prologue speaks of them in the plural number, and it is probable that Beaumont assisted in the latter part of it, but I believe not much in the two first acts, as these are so very much taken from Lucan, and the observation of Beaumont's not indulging himself in such liberties holds good in all the plays in which he is known to have had the largest share.—*Seward.*

[*] See vols. V. and VII.

league, Shakspeare, expresses it in their Two Noble Kinsmen, vol. X. p. 32:—

> "They were an endless mine to one another;
> They were each other's wife, ever begetting
> New births of wit."

They were both extremely remarkable for their ready flow of wit in conversation as well as composition, and gentlemen that remembered them, says Shirley, declare, that on every occasion they talked a comedy. As, therefore, they were so twinned in genius, worth, and wit, so lovely and pleasant in their lives, after death, let not their fame be ever again divided.

And now, reader, when thou art fired into rage or melted into pity by their tragic scenes, charmed with the genteel elegance, or bursting into laughter at their comic humour, canst thou not drop the intervening ages, steal into Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher's club-room at the Mermaid, on a night when Shakspeare, Donne, and others visited them, and there join in society with as great wits as ever this nation, or perhaps ever Greece or Rome, could at one time boast? where, animated each by the other's presence, they even excelled themselves;

> "For wit is like a rest,
> Held up at tennis, which men do the best
> With the best gamesters. What things have we seen
> Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
> So nimble and so full of subtle flame,
> As if that every one from whence they came
> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
> And had resolved to live a fool the rest
> Of his dull life. then when there hath been thrown
> Wit able enough to justify the town
> For three days past; wit that might warrant be
> For the whole city to talk foolishly
> Till that were cancell'd; and when that was gone
> We left an air behind us, which alone

Was able to make the two next companies
Right witty; though but downright fools, mere wise."
Beaumont's Letter to Jonson, vol. xiv. p. 432.

Hitherto the reader has received only the portraits of our authors without any proof of the similitude and justice of the draught; nor can we hope that it will appear just from a mere cursory view of the originals. Many people read plays chiefly for the sake of the plot, hurrying still on for that discovery. The happy contrivance of surprising but natural incidents is certainly a very great beauty in the drama, and little writers have often made their advantages of it; they could contrive incidents to embarrass and perplex the plot, and by that alone have succeeded and pleased, without perhaps a single line of nervous poetry, a single sentiment worthy of memory, without a passion worked up with natural vigour, or a character of any distinguished marks. The best poets have rarely made this dramatic mechanism their point. Neither Sophocles, Euripides, Terence, Shakspeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, or Jonson, are at all remarkable for forming a labyrinth of incidents, and entangling their readers in a pleasing perplexity: Our late dramatic poets learnt this from the French, and they from romance-writers and novelists. We could almost wish the readers of Beaumont and Fletcher to drop the expectation of the event of each story, to attend with more care to the beauty and energy of the sentiments, diction, passions, and characters. Every good author pleases more, the more he is examined; (hence perhaps that partiality of editors to their own authors; by a more intimate acquaintance, they discover more of their beauties than they do of others) especially when the style and

manner are quite old-fashioned, and the beauties hid under the uncouthness of the dress. The taste and fashion of poetry varies in every age, and though our old dramatic writers are as preferable to the modern as Vandyke and Rubens to our modern painters, yet most eyes must be accustomed to their manner before they can discern their excellencies. Thus the very best plays of Shakspeare were forced to be dressed fashionably by the poetic tailors of the late ages before they could be admitted upon the stage, and a very few years since his comedies in general were under the highest contempt. Few, very few durst speak of them with any sort of regard, till the many excellent criticisms upon that author made people study him, and some excellent actors revived these comedies, which completely opened men's eyes; and it is now become as fashionable to admire as it had been to decry them.

Shakspeare therefore, even in his second-best manner, being now generally admired, we shall endeavour to prove that his second-rate and our authors' first-rate beauties are so near upon a par that they are scarce distinguishable. A preface allows not room for sufficient proofs of this, but we will produce at least some parallels of poetic diction and sentiments, and refer to some of the characters and passions.

The instances shall be divided into three classes The first of passages where our authors fall short in comparison of Shakspeare; the second of such as are not easily discerned from him; the third of those where Beaumont and Fletcher have the advantage.

In the Maid's Tragedy there is a similar passage to one of Shakspeare, the comparison of which alone will be no bad scale to judge of their different ex-

cellencies. Melantius the general thus speaks of his friend Amintor:—

"His worth is great, valiant he is and temperate,
And one that never thinks his life his own
If his friend need it: When he was a boy,
As oft as I returned (as, without boast,
I brought home conquest) he would gaze upon me,
And view me round, to find in what one limb
The virtue lay to do those things he heard;
Then would he wish to see my sword, and feel
The quickness of the edge, and in his hand
Weigh it.—He oft would make me smile at this;
His youth did promise much, and his ripe years
Will see it all performed."

A youth gazing on every limb of the victorious chief, then begging his sword, feeling its edge, and poising it in his arm, are attitudes nobly expressive of the inward ardour and ecstacy of soul: But what is most observable is,

"And in his hand
Weigh it——He oft, &c."

By this beautiful pause, or break, the action and picture continue in view, and the poet, like Homer, is eloquent in silence. It is a species of beauty that shews an intimacy with that father of poetry, in whom it occurs extremely often.[9] Milton has an exceeding fine one in the description of his Lazar-House:—

"Despair
'Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch,
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook,—but delay'd to strike," &c.
Paradise Lost, book xi. line 489.

9 See two noble instances at l. 141 of the 13th Book of the Iliad, and in the application of the same simile a few lines below. -*Seward.*

As Shakspeare did not study versification so much as those poets who were conversant in Homer and Virgil, I don't remember in him any striking instance of this species of beauty. But he even wanted it not; his sentiments are so amazingly striking, that they pierce the heart at once; and diction and numbers, which are the beauty and nerves adorning and invigorating the thoughts of other poets, to him are but like the bodies of angels, azure vehicles, through which the whole soul shines transparent. Of this take the following instance. The old Belarius in Cymbeline is describing the in-born royalty of the two princes whom he had bred up as peasants in his cave :—

> This Paladour, (whom
> The king his father call'd Guiderius) Jove!
> When on my three-foot stool I sit, and tell
> The warlike feats I've done, his spirits fly out
> Into my story: Say thus mine enemy fell,
> And thus I set my foot on's neck—even then
> The princely blood flows in his cheek, he sweats,
> Strains his young nerves, and puts himself in posture
> That acts my words."—
>
> *Cymbeline, act iii. scene iii*

Much the same difference as between these two passages occurs likewise in the following pictures of rural melancholy, the first of innocence forlorn, the second of philosophic tenderness :—

> " I have a boy
> Sent by the gods I hope to this intent,
> Not yet seen in the court. Hunting the buck
> I found him sitting by a fountain-side,
> Of which he borrow'd some to quench his thirst,
> And paid the nymph again as much in tears;
> A garland lay by him, made by himself
> Of many several flowers, bred in the bay,
> Stuck in that mystic order that the rareness
> Delighted me: But ever when he turn'd

His tender eyes upon them, he would weep,
As if he meant to make them grow again.
Seeing such pretty helpless innocence
Dwell in his face, I ask'd him all his story;
He told me, that his parents gentle died,
Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,
Which gave him roots, and of the crystal springs
Which did not stop their courses; and the sun
Which still, he thank'd him, yielded him his light.
Then took he up his garland, and did shew,
What every flower, as country people hold,
Did signify; and how all, order'd thus,
Exprest his grief; and to my thoughts did read
The prettiest lecture of his country art
That could be wish'd, so that methought I could
Have studied it."— *Philaster.*

Jaques, in As You like It, is moralizing upon the fate of the deer gored by the hunters in their native confines:—

" The melancholy Jaques grieves at that,

To-day my lord of Amiens and myself
Did steal behind him, as he lay along
Under an oak, whose antique root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood;
To the which place a poor sequestered stag,
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,
Did come to languish; and indeed, my lord,
The wretched animal heaved forth such groans,
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat
Almost to bursting; and the big round tears
Cours'd one another down his innocent nose
In piteous chase; and thus the hairy fool,
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,
Stood on th' extremest verge of the swift brook,
Augmenting it with tears.
Duke. But what said Jaques?
Did he not moralize this spectacle?
1 *Lord.* Oh, yes, into a thousand similies.
First, for his weeping in the needless stream;
Poor deer, quoth he, thou mak'st a testament
As worldlings do, giving thy sum of more
To that which had too much; then being alone,
Left and abandon'd of his velvet friends:

'Tis right, quoth he, thus misery doth part
The flux of company: Anon a careless herd,
Full of the pasture, jumps along by him,
And never stays to greet him: Ay, quoth Jaques,
Sweep on, ye fat and greasy citizens,
'Tis just the fashion," &c.

As You like It, act ii. scene i.

Shakspeare is certainly much preferable, but 'tis only as a Raphael is preferable to a Guido—Philaster alone would afford numbers of passages similar to some of Shakspeare's, upon which the same observation will hold true, they are not equal to his very best manner, but they approach near it. As I have mentioned Jonson being in poetic energy about the same distance below our authors as Shakspeare is above them, I shall quote three passages which seem to me in this very scale. Jonson translates verbatim from Sallust great part of Catiline's speech to his soldiers, but adds in the close,

" Methinks, I see Death and the Furies waiting
What we will do; and all the Heaven at leisure
For the great spectacle. Draw then your swords.
And if our destiny envy our virtue
The honour of the day, yet let us care
To sell ourselves at such a price as may
Undo the world to buy us, and make Fate,
While she tempts ours, fear for her own estate."

Catiline, act v.

Jonson has here added greatly to the ferocity, terror, and despair of Catiline's speech, but it is consonant to his character both in his life and death. The image in the three first lines is extremely noble, and may be said to emulate, though not quite to reach, the poetic ecstacy of the following passage in Bonduca. Suetonius, the Roman general, having his small army hemmed round by multitudes, tells his soldiers, that the number of the foes

"Is but to stick more honour on your actions,
Load you with virtuous names, and to your memories
Tie never-dying time and fortune constant.
Go on in full assurance, draw your swords
As daring and as confident as justice.
The gods of Rome fight for ye; loud Fame calls ye
Pitch'd on the topless Apennine, and blows
To all the under world, all nations, seas,
And unfrequented desarts where the snow dwells;
Wakens the ruin'd monuments, and there
Informs again the dead bones with your virtues."

The four first lines are extremely nervous; but the image which appears to excel the noble one of Jonson above, is Fame pitch'd on mount Apennine (whose top is supposed viewless from its stupendous height) and from thence sounding their virtues so loud that the dead awake, and are re-animated to hear them. The close of the sentiment is extremely in the spirit of Shakspeare and Milton; the former says of a storm——

"That with the hurly Death itself awakes;"

Milton in Comus, describing a lady's singing, says,

"He took in sounds that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death."

To return to Shakspeare—With him we must soar far above the topless Apennine, and there behold an image much nobler than our authors' Fame:—

"For now sits Expectation in the air,[1]
And hides a sword from hilts unto the point
With crowns imperial."——
Chorus in Henry V. act ii. scene i.

[1] *For now sits Expectation, &c.*] See Mr Warburton's just observation on the beauty of the imagery here. But, as similar beauties do not always strike the same taste alike, another pas-

As we shall now go on to the second class, and quote passages where the hand of Shakspeare is not so easily discerned from our authors', if the reader happens to remember neither, it may be entertaining to be left to guess at the different hands. Thus each of them describing a beautiful boy :—

"Dear lad, believe it,
For they shall yet belie thy happy years
That say thou art a man: Diana's lip
Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe
Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
And all is semblative a woman's part."

The other is,

"Alas! what kind of grief can thy years know?
———————————————
Thy brows and cheeks are smooth as waters be
When no breath troubles them: Believe me, boy,
Care seeks out wrinkled brows and hollow eyes,
And builds himself caves to abide in them."

The one is in Philaster, vol. x. page 169; the other in Twelfth-Night, act i. scene 4.—In the same page of Philaster there is a description of love, which the reader, if he pleases, may compare to two descriptions of love in As You like It—both by Silvia, but neither preferable to our authors'. I can-

sage in this play, that seems to deserve the same admiration, is rejected by this great man as not Shakspeare's. The French King, speaking of the Black Prince's victory at Cressy, says,

While that his mountain sire, on mountain standing,
"Up in the air crown'd with the golden sun,"
Saw his heroic seed, and smil'd to see him
Mangle the work of nature. *Henry V. act ii. scene 4.*

I have marked the line rejected, and which seems to breathe the full soul of Shakspeare. The reader will find a defence and explanation of the whole passage in a note on Thierry and Theodoret, act IV. scene I. vol. XII.—*Seward.*

not quote half of those which occur in the play of Philaster alone, which bear the same degree of likeness as the last-quoted passages, *i. e.* where the hands are scarce to be distinguished; but I will give one parallel more from thence, because the passages are both extremely fine, though the hands, from one single expression of Shakspeare's, are more visible; a prince deprived of his throne and betrayed, as he thought, in love, thus mourns his melancholy state:—

" Oh! that I had been nourish'd in these woods
With milk of goats and acorns, and not known
The right of crowns, nor the dissembling trains
Of women's looks; but digg'd myself a cave,
Where I,[4] my fire, my cattle, and my bed,
Might have been shut together in one shed;
And then had taken me some mountain girl,
Beaten with winds, chaste as the harden'd rocks
Whereon she dwells; that might have strew'd my bed
With leaves and reeds, and with the skins of beasts
Our neighbours; and have borne at her big breasts
My large coarse issue!"

In the other, a king thus compares the state of royalty to that of a private life:—

" No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,
Not all these laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave,
Who with a body fill'd, and vacant mind,
Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful bread;
Never sees horrid Night, the child of hell:
But, like a lackey, from the rise to set,
Sweats in the eye of Phœbus, and all night
Sleeps in Elysium; next day after dawn,
Doth rise and help Hyperion to his horse;
And follows so the ever-running year
With profitable labour to his grave.
And (but for ceremony) such a wretch
Winding up days with toil, and nights with sleep,
Hath the forehand and 'vantage of a king."

[4] Juvenal, Sat. vi.—*Seward.*

The instances of these two classes, particularly the former, where the exquisite beauties of Shakspeare are not quite reached, are most numerous; and though the design of the notes in this edition was in general only to settle the text, yet in three of the plays, The Faithful Shepherdess, The False One, and The Two Noble Kinsmen, that design is much enlarged, for reasons there assigned. And if the reader pleases to turn to these, he will find several parallels between Fletcher, Shakspeare, and Milton, that are most of them to be ranged under one of these classes: But there is a third class of those instances where our authors have been so happy as to soar above Shakspeare, and even where Shakspeare is not greatly beneath himself.

In The Two Gentlemen of Verona, the forlorn Julia, disguised as a boy, being asked of Silvia how tall Julia was, answers,

"About my stature; for at Pentecost,
When all our pageants of delight were play'd,
Our youth got me to play the woman's part,
And I was trimm'd in madam Julia's gown.
And at that time I made her weep a-good,
For I did play a lamentable part.
Madam, 'twas Ariadne passioning
For Theseus' perjury and unjust flight;
Which I so lively acted with my tears,
That my poor mistress, moved therewithal,
Wept bitterly, and would I might be dead,
If I in thought felt not her very sorrow."

Act iv. scene the last.

There is something extremely tender, innocent, and delicate, in these lines of Shakspeare, but our authors are far beyond this praise in their allusion to the same story. In The Maid's Tragedy, Aspatia, in like manner forsaken by her lover, finds her maid Antiphila working a picture of Ariadne; and, after several fine reflections upon Theseus, says,

"But where's the lady?
Ant. There, madam.
Asp. Fy, you have miss'd it here, Antiphila,
These colours are not dull and pale enough,
To shew a soul so full of misery
As this sad lady's was; do it by me;
Do it again by me, the lost Aspatia,
And you shall find all true.—Put me on th' wild island.
I stand upon the sea-beach now, and think
Mine arms thus, and mine hair blown by the wind,
Wild as that desart, and let all about me
Be teachers of my story: do my face
(If thou hadst ever feeling of a sorrow)
Thus, thus, Antiphila; strive to make me look
Like Sorrow's monument; and the trees about me
Let them be dry and leafless; let the rocks
Groan with continual surges, and behind me
Make all a desolation; see, see, wenches,
A miserable life of this poor picture." *Vol. xii. p.* 51.

Whoever has seen either the original or print of Guido's Bacchus and Ariadne will have the best comment on these lines. In both are the arms extended, the hair blown by the wind, the barren roughness of the rocks, the broken trunks of leafless trees, and in both she looks like Sorrow's monument. So that exactly *ut pictura poesis;* and hard it is to say, whether our authors or Guido painted best. I shall refer to the note[a] below for a farther comment, and proceed to another instance of superior excellence in our authors, and where they have more evidently built on Shakspeare's foundation. At the latter end of King John the King has received a burning poison; and being asked

"How fares your majesty?
K. John. Poison'd, ill fare! dead, forsook, cast off;
And none of you will bid the Winter come,

[a] As this note contains nothing but a string of very needless emendations on the above speech, and some others in the Maid's Tragedy, it is here omitted.

To thrust his icy fingers in my maw;
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course
Through my burnt bosom; nor entreat the North
To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips,
And comfort me with cold.—I do not ask you much,
I beg cold comfort."

The first and last lines are to be ranged among the faults that so much disgrace Shakspeare, which he committed to please the corrupt taste of the age he lived in, but to which Beaumont and Fletcher's learning and fortune made them superior. The intermediate lines are extremely beautiful, and marked as such by the late great editor, but yet are much improved in two plays of our authors, the first in Valentinian, where the Emperor, poisoned in the same manner, dies with more violence, fury, and horror, than King John; but the passage which I shall quote is from a Wife for a Month, a play which does not upon the whole equal the poetic sublimity of Valentinian, though it rather excels it in the poisoning scene. The prince Alphonso, who had been long in a phrenzy of melancholy, is poisoned with a hot fiery potion; under the agonies of which he thus raves:

"Give me more air, more air, air; blow, blow, blow,
Open, thou eastern gate, and blow upon me;
Distil thy cold dews, oh, thou icy moon,
And rivers run through my afflicted spirit.
I am all fire, fire, fire; the raging Dog-star
Reigns in my blood; oh, which way shall I turn me?
Ætna and all her flames burn in my head.
Fling me into the ocean or I perish.
Dig, dig, dig, dig, until the springs fly up,
The cold, cold springs, that I may leap into them,
And bathe my scorch'd limbs in their purling pleasures;
Or shoot me into the higher region,
Where treasures of delicious snow are nourish'd,
And banquets of sweet hail.
Rug. Hold him fast, friar,

Oh, how he burns!
Alph. What, will ye sacrifice me?
Upon the altar lay my willing body,
And pile your wood up, fling your holy incense;
And, as I turn me, you shall see all flame,
Consuming flame. Stand off me, or you're ashes,
* * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * *
Mart. To bed, good sir.
Alph. My bed will burn about me;
Like Phaeton, in all-consuming flashes
Am I enclosed; let me fly, let me fly, give room;
'Twixt the cold bears, far from the raging lion,
Lies my safe way; oh, for a cake of ice now
To clap unto my heart to comfort me.
Decrepit Winter, hang upon my shoulders,
And let me wear thy frozen icicles,
Like jewels round about my head, to cool me.
My eyes burn out and sink into their sockets,
And my infected brain like brimstone boils;
I live in hell and several furies vex me.
Oh, carry me where never sun e'er shew'd yet
A face of comfort, where the earth is crystal,
Never to be dissolved, where nought inhabits
But night and cold, and nipping frosts and winds,
That cut the stubborn rocks, and make them shiver;
Set me there, friends."——

Every reader of taste will see how superior this is to the quotation from Shakspeare. The images are vastly more numerous, more judicious, more nervous, and the passions are wrought up to the highest pitch; so that it may be fairly preferred to every thing of its kind in all Shakspeare, except one scene of Lear's madness, which it would emulate too, could we see such an excellent comment on it as Lear receives from his representative on the stage.

As these last quotations are not only specimens of diction and sentiment, but of passions inflamed into poetic enthusiasm, I shall refer the reader to some other parallels of passions and characters that

greatly resemble, and sometimes rival, the spirit and sublimity of Shakspeare. He will please therefore to compare the phrenzy and the whole sweet character of the Jailor's Daughter in the Two Noble Kinsmen to Ophelia in Hamlet, where the copy is so extremely like the original that either the same hand drew both, or Fletcher's is not to be distinguished from Shakspeare's:—To compare the deaths of Pontius and Aëcius in Valentinian with that of Cassius, Brutus, and their friends in Julius Cæsar, and if he admires a little less, he will weep much more; it more excels in the pathetic than it falls short in dignity:—To compare the character and passions of Cleopatra in the False One to those of Shakspeare's Cleopatra:—To compare the pious deprecations and grief-mingled fury of Edith (upon the murder of her father by Rollo, in the Bloody Brother) to the grief and fury of Macduff, upon his wife and children's murder. Our authors will not, we hope, be found light in the scale in any of these instances; though their beam in general fly some little upwards, it will, sometimes at least, tug hard for a poise. But be it allowed, that as in diction and sentiment, so in characters and passions, Shakspeare in general excels, yet here too a very strong instance occurs of pre-eminence in our authors. It is Juliana in the Double Marriage, who, through her whole character, in conjugal fidelity, unshaken constancy and amiable tenderness, even more than rivals the Portia of Shakspeare, and her death not only far excels the other's, but even the most pathetic deaths that Shakspeare has any where described or exhibited; King Lear's, with Cordelia dead in his arms, most resembles, but by no means equals it; the grief, in this case, only pushes an old man into the grave, already half buried with age and misfortunes; in the other, it is such consummate hor-

ror, as, in a few minutes, freezes youth and beauty into a monumental statue. The last parallel I shall mention, shall give Shakspeare his due preference, where our authors very visibly emulate but cannot reach him. It is the quarrel of Amintor and Melantius in the Maid's Tragedy compared to that of Brutus and Cassius. The beginning of the quarrel is upon as just grounds, and the passions are wrought up to as great violence, but there is not such extreme dignity of character, nor such noble sentiments of morality, in either Amintor or Melantius as in Brutus.[3]

Having thus given, we hope, pretty strong proofs of our authors' excellence in the sublime, and shewn how near they approach in splendour to the great sun of the British theatre, let us now just touch on their comedies, and draw one parallel of a very different kind. Horace makes a doubt whether co-

[3] One key to Amintor's heroism and distress will, I believe, solve all the objections that have been raised to this scene; which will vanish at once by only an occasional conformity to our authors' ethical and political principles. They held passive obedience and non-resistance to princes an indispensable duty; a doctrine which Queen Elizabeth's goodness made her subjects fond of imbibing, and which her successor's king-craft, with far different views, carried to its highest pitch. In this period our authors wrote, and we may as well quarrel with Tasso for popery, or with Homer and Virgil for heathenism, as with our authors for this principle. It is therefore the violent shocks of the highest provocations struggling with what Amintor thought his eternal duty; of nature rebelling against principle (as a famous partisan for this doctrine in Queen Anne's reign expressed it, when he happened not to be in the ministry) which drive the heroic youth into that phrenzy which makes him challenge his dearest friend for espousing too revengefully his own quarrel against the sacred majesty of the most abandonedly wicked king. The same key is necessary to the heroism of Aecius, Aubrey, Archas, and many others of our authors' characters; in all which the reader will perhaps think there is something unnaturally absurd; but the absurdity is wholly chargeable on the doctrine, not on the poets. —*Seward.*

medy should be called poetry or not, *i. e.* whether the comedies of Terence, Plautus, Menander, &c. should be esteemed such, for in its own nature there is a comic poetic diction as well as a tragic one; a diction which Horace himself was a great master of, though it had not then been used in the drama; for even the sublimest sentiments of Terence, when his comedy raises its voice to the greatest dignity, are still not cloathed in poetic diction. The British drama, which before Jonson received only some little improvement from the models of Greece and Rome, but sprung chiefly from their own moralities, and religious farces, and had a birth extremely similar to what the Grecian drama originally sprung from, differed in its growth from the Greeks chiefly in two particulars. The latter separated the solemn parts of their religious shews from the satiric farcical parts of them, and so formed the distinct species of tragedy and comedy; the Britons were not so happy, but suffered them to continue united, even in the hands of as great or greater poets than Sophocles and Euripides. But they had far better success in the second instance. The Greeks appropriated the spirit and nerves of poetry to tragedy only, and though they did not wholly deprive the comedy of metre, they left it not the shadow of poetic diction and sentiment;

Idcirco quidam, comœdia ne ne poema
Esset, quæsivêre: Quod acer spiritus ac vis
Nec verbis nec rebus inest.

The Britons not only retained metre in their comedies, but also all the *acer spiritus*, all the strength and nerves of poetry, which was in a good measure owing to the happiness of our blank verse, which

at the same time that it is capable of the highest sublimity, the most extensive and noblest harmony of the tragic and epic, yet, when used familiarly, is so near the *sermo pedestris*, so easy and natural, as to be well adapted even to the drollest comic dialogue. The French common metre is the very reverse of this; it is much too stiff and formal either for tragedy or comedy, unable to rise with proper dignity to the sublimity of the one, or to descend with ease to the jocose familiarity of the other. Besides the cramp of rhyme, every line is cut asunder by so strong a cæsure, that in English we should divide it into the three-foot stanza, as

> "When Fanny blooming fair
> First caught my ravish'd sight,
> Struck with her shape and air,
> I felt a strange delight."[4]

Take one of the rhimes from these, and write them in two lines, they are exactly the same with the French tragic and epic metre:—

> "When Fanny blooming fair, first caught my ravish'd sight,
> Struck with her air and shape, I felt a strange delight."

In a language where this is their sublimest measure, no wonder that their greatest poet should write his Telemaque, an Epic Poem, in prose. Every one must know that the genteel parts of comedy, descriptions of polite life, moral sentences, paternal fondness, filial duty, generous friendship, and particularly the delicacy and tenderness of lovers' sentiments, are equally proper to poetry in comedy as tragedy; in these things there is no sort of real difference between the two, and what the

[4] This is the first stanza of a song by Lord Chesterfield.—*Reed.*

Greeks and Latins formed had no foundation in nature; our old poets, therefore, made no such difference, and their comedies, in this respect, vastly excel the Latins and Greeks. Jonson, who reformed many faults of our drama, and followed the plans of Greece and Rome very closely in most instances, yet preserved the poetic fire and diction of comedy as a great excellence. How many instances of inimitable poetic beauties might one produce from Shakspeare's comedies? Not so many, yet extremely numerous, are those of our authors, and such as in an ancient classic would be thought beauties of the first magnitude. These lie before me in such variety, that I scarce know where to fix. But I'll confine myself chiefly to moral sentiments. In The Elder Brother, Charles the scholar thus speaks of the joys of literature; being asked by his father——

"Nor will you
Take care of my estate?
Char. But in my wishes;
For know, sir, that the wings on which my soul
Is mounted, have long since borne her too high
To stoop to any prey that soars not upwards.
Sordid and dunghill minds, composed of earth,
In that gross element fix all their happiness;
But purer spirits, purged and refined, shake off
That clog of human frailty. Give me leave
T' enjoy myself; that place that does contain
My books, the best companions, is to me
A glorious court, where hourly I converse
With the old sages and philosophers;
And sometimes, for variety, I confer
With kings and emperors, and weigh their counsels;
Calling their victories, if unjustly got,
Unto a strict account, and, in my fancy,
Deface their ill-placed statues." *Vol. x. ii.* p. 123.

In Monsieur Thomas, a youth in love with his friend's intended wife, after resisting the greatest

temptations of passion, is thus encouraged by the young lady to persevere in his integrity:

" *Francis.* Whither do you drive me?
Cellide. Back to your honesty, make that good ever,
'Tis like a strong-built castle seated high,
That draws on all ambitions; still repair it,
Still fortify it: There are thousand foes,
Beside the tyrant beauty, will assail it.
Look to your centinels that watch it hourly,
Your eyes, let them not wander,———
————————————Keep your ears,
The two main ports that may betray ye, strongly
From light belief first, then from flattery,
Especially where woman beats the parley;
The body of your strength, your noble heart
From ever yielding to dishonest ends,
Ridged round about with virtue, that no breaches,
No subtle mines may find you." [3]

[3] Our authors, in carrying the metaphor of a citadel compared to the mind through so many divisions, seem to have built on the foundation of St Paul, who, in like manner, carries on a metaphor from armour through its several parts.—Ephesians vi. 11.

Put on the whole armour of God; having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness.—Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. See also the same metaphor in Isaiah lix. 17, from whom St Paul took his. Were I to quote our authors' frequent resemblance to the style and sentiments of the scriptures, another very large field would open to us, and this would help us to the solution of two questions, which they who have a just taste of the excellencies of our old English poets naturally ask: 1. How came the British muse, in the very infancy of literature, when but just sprung from the dark womb of monkish superstition, to rise at once to such maturity as she did in Spenser, Shakspeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson, and Massinger? 2. What spirit is it that has animated the frozen foggy genius of Britain into a nobler and fiercer flame of poetry than was ever yet kindled in the bright invigorating climes of France and modern Italy; insomuch, that a Gallic and Italian eye is dazzled and offended at the brightness of the noblest expressions of Milton and the authors above-mentioned? We answer, it was no less a spirit than the Spirit of God, it was the Sun of Righteousness, the hal-

As Cellidè had before used a light behaviour in trial of his virtue, upon finding it only a trial, and receiving from her this virtuous lecture, he rejoins—

-" How like the sun
Labouring in his eclipse, dark and prodigious,
She shew'd till now? when having won his way,
How full of wonder he breaks out again
And sheds his virtuous beams?"

Such passages as these are frequent in our authors' comedies; were they exprest only in genteel prose,

lowed light of the scriptures that was just then risen on the British clime, but is still hid in clouds and darkness to France and Italy. A light to which the brightest strokes of Milton and Shakspeare are but as the rays of the mid-day sun, when compared to that ineffable, inconceivable lustre which surrounds the throne of God. When the zeal of religion ran high, and a collection of far the noblest poems that were ever wrote in the world, those of Job, David, Isaiah, and all the prophets, were daily read, and publicly, solemnly, and learnedly commented upon, in almost every town in the kingdom; when every man thought it a disgrace not to study them in private, and not to treasure the noblest parts of them in his memory, what wonder was it that our poets should catch so much of the sacred fire, or that the British genius should be arrayed with the beams of the East? But when the love of the scriptures waxed faint, the nerves of our poetry grew in the same proportion weak and languid. One of the best means therefore to gain a true taste of the extreme poetic sublimity of the sarred scriptures, is to converse with those poets whose style and sentiments most resemble them. And the very best means to restore the British genius to its pristine vigour, and to create other Shakspeares and other Miltons, is to promote the study, love, and admiration of those scriptures.

A concurrent cause, which raised the spirit of poetry to such a height in Queen Elizabeth's reign, was the encouragement and influence of the queen herself, to whom polite literature was the most courtly accomplishment. Look into Spenser's Description of her Lords and Favourites, and you'll find a learned queen made a whole court of poets, just as an amorous monarch afterwards made every flowery courtier write romance; and martial princes have turned intimidated armies into heroes.—*Seward.*

they would rank with the very noblest passages of Terence; but what reason upon earth can be assigned, but mere fashion, why, because they are parts of comedies, they should be weakened and flattened into prose[9] by drawing the sinews of their strength, and eclipsing those poetic beams that shed vigour, life, and lustre, on every sentiment?

Such poetic excellence, therefore, will the reader find in the genteel parts of our authors' comedies; but, as before hinted, there is a poetic style often equally proper and excellent even in the lowest drollery of comedy. Thus, when the jocose old Miramont, in The Elder Brother, catches the austere solemn magistrate Brisac endeavouring to debauch his servant's wife, before he breaks in upon him, he says—

"Oh, th' infinite frights that will assail this gentleman!
The quartans, tertians, and quotidians,
That'll hang, like sergeants, on his worship's shoulders!
How will those solemn looks appear to me,
And that severe face that spake chains and shackles!"

How small a change of the comic words would turn this into the sublime? suppose it spoke of Nero by one who knew he would be at once deserted by the senate and army, and given up to the fury of the people:

"What infinite frights will soon assail the tyrant?
What terrors like stern lictors will arrest him?
How will that fierce terrific eye appear,
Whose slightest bend spake dungeons, chains, and death?"

[9] There is much less prose left in this edition than there was in all the former, in which the measure was often most miserably neglected. Wit without Money, the very first play which fell to my lot to prepare for the press after Mr Theobald's death, was all printed as prose, except about twenty lines towards the end; but the reader will now find it as true measure as almost any comedy of our authors.—*Seward.*

Such as the former is the general style of our authors' drollery, particularly of Fletcher's; Beaumont deals chiefly in another species, the burlesque epic. Thus when the Little comic French Lawyer is run fighting mad, and his antagonist excepts against his shirt for not being laced (as gentlemen's shirts of that age used to be) he answers—

"Base and degenerate cousin, dost not know
An old and tatter'd colours to an enemy,
Is of more honour, and shews more ominous?
This shirt five times victorious I've fought under,
And cut through squadrons of your curious cut-works,
As I will do through thine; shake and be satisfied."

This style runs through many of Beaumont's characters beside La Writ's, as Lazarillo, the Knight of the Burning Pestle, Bessus's two Swordsmen, &c.; and he has frequent allusions to, and even parodies of the sublimest parts of Shakspeare, which both Mr Sympson and Mr Theobald look upon as sneers upon a poet of greater eminence than the supposed sneerer, (a very great[1] crime if true) but I believe it an entire mistake. The nature of this burlesque epic requires the frequent use of the most known and most acknowledged expressions of sublimity, which, applied to low objects, render them, not the author of these expressions, ridiculous. Almost all men of wit make the same use of Shakspeare and Milton's expressions

[1] For a further defence of our authors from this imputation see vol. V. p. 223, of The Little French Lawyer, and vol. X. p. 64, of The Woman-Hater. In both which there is a mistake with regard to the author of those plays. When I wrote the notes, I supposed it Fletcher, till Beaumont's letter at the end of The Nice Valour gave me a key, which is given to the reader in the first section of the preface, and which explains the difference of manner between Beaumont and Fletcher.—*Seward.*

in common conversation, without the least thought of sneering either; and, indeed, if every quotation from Shakspeare, thus jocularly applied, is a real sneer upon him, then all burlesque sublime is a sneer upon the real sublime, and Beaumont sneered himself as well as Shakspeare.

From these three short specimens, the reader will form, we hope, a just idea of the three styles used in our authors' comedies, the sublime, the droll poetic, and the burlesque sublime. There is indeed a small mixture of prose, which is the only part of our old dramatic poets' style that moderns have vouchsafed to imitate. Did they acknowledge the truth, and confess their inability to rise to the spirit, vigour, and dignity of the other styles, they were pardonable. But far from it; our reformed taste calls for prose only; and before Beaumont and Fletcher's plays can be endured by such attic ears, they must be corrected into prose, as if, because well-brewed porter is a wholesome draught, therefore claret and burgundy must be dashed with porter before they were drinkable. For a true specimen of our modern taste, we will give the reader one cup of our authors' wine thus porterised, and that by one who perfectly knew the palate of the age, who pleased it greatly in this very instance, and some of whose comedies have as much or more merit than any moderns, except Congreve. Mr Cibber has consolidated two of our authors' plays, The Elder Brother, and The Custom of the Country, to form his Love makes a Man, or the Fop's Fortune. In the former there are two old French noblemen, Lewis and Brisac, the first proud of his family and fortune, the other of his magisterial power and dignity; neither men of learning, and therefore both preferring courtly accomplishments, and the knowledge of the world, to the deepest

knowledge of books, and the most extensive literature. Such characters exclude not good sense in general, but in that part of their characters only where their foibles lie; (as Polonius in Hamlet is a fool in his pedantic foibles, and a man of sense in all other instances) accordingly Fletcher makes Brisac and Lewis thus treat of a marriage between their children:—

" *Bri.* Good monsieur Lewis, I esteem myself
Much honour'd in your clear intent to join
Our ancient families, and make them one;
And 'twill take from my age and cares, to live
And see what you have purposed put in act;
Of which your visit at this present is
A hopeful omen; I each minute expecting
Th' arrival of my sons; I have not wrong'd
Their birth for want of means and education,
To shape them to that course each was addicted;
And therefore, that we may proceed discreetly,
Since what's concluded rashly seldom prospers,
You first shall take a strict perusal of them,
And then from your allowance, your fair daughter
May fashion her affection.
Lew. Monsieur Brisac,
You offer fair and nobly, and I'll meet you
In the same line of honour; and, I hope,
Being blest but with one daughter, I shall not
Appear impertinently curious,
Though with my utmost vigilance and study
I labour to bestow her to her worth:
Let others speak her form, and future fortune
From me descending to her, I in that
Sit down with silence.
Bri. You may, my lord, securely,
Since Fame aloud proclaimeth her perfections,
Commanding all men's tongues to sing her praises."

I quote not this as an instance of the sublime, but of our authors' genteel dialogue, enlivened by a few poetic figures, as, in the last lines, Fame is personized, and commands the tongues of men. Now let us see this dialogue modernized: the names

of the old gentlemen being changed to Antonio and Charino, they thus confer:

" *Ant.* Without compliment, my old friend, I shall think myself much honour'd in your alliance; our families are both ancient, our children young, and able to support 'em; and I think the sooner we set 'em to work the better.

Cha. Sir, you offer fair and nobly, and shall find I dare meet you in the same line of honour; and I hope, since I have but one girl in the world, you won't think me a troublesome old fool, if I endeavour to bestow her to her worth; therefore, if you please, before we shake hands, a word or two by the bye, for I have some considerable questions to ask you.

Ant. Ask 'em.

Cha. Well, in the first place, you say you have two sons?

Ant. Exactly.

Cha. And you are willing that one of 'em shall marry my daughter?

Ant. Willing.

Cha. My daughter Angelina?

Ant. Angelina.

Cha. And you are likewise content that the said Angelina shall survey 'em both, and, with my allowance, take to her lawful husband which of 'em she pleases?

Ant. Content.

Cha. And you farther promise, that the person by her, and me, so chosen, be it elder or younger, shall be your sole heir; that is to say, shall be in a conditional possession of at least three parts of your estate. You know the conditions, and this you positively promise?

Ant. To perform.

Cha. Why then, as the last token of my full consent and approbation, I give you my hand.

Ant. There's mine.

Cha. Is't a match?

Ant. A match.

Cha. Done.

Ant. Done.

Cha. And done!——that's enough."——

Strike out an expression or two of Fletcher's, and a couple of graziers would have put more sense into an ox bargain. I blame not the author; if a man's customers resolve to pay the price of champaign, and yet insist upon mild and stale, who

would refuse it them? This is only a specimen of the taste of the late wonderfully enlightened age. But as Shakspeare and Milton have already in a good measure dispersed the clouds of prejudice which had long obscured their excellencies, 'tis to be hoped that our eyes are now inured to bear the lustre of such poets who most resemble these suns of Britain. To such readers, therefore, who are desirous of becoming acquainted with the excellencies of Beaumont and Fletcher, I shall beg leave to recommend their plays to be read in the following order, beginning with which species they like best.[*]

CLASS I.

Tragedies and Tragi-Comedies.	vol.	*Pastoral.*	Vol.	*Comedies.*	Vol.
Maid's Tragedy	12	Faithful Shepherdess	4	Elder Brother	12
Philaster	10			Rule a Wife and have a Wife	2
King and no King	12			Little French Lawyer	5
The Two Noble Kinsmen	13			Wit without Money	2
The Double Marriage	8			Spanish Curate	3
The Bloody Brother, or Rollo	7			Nice Valour, or Passionate Madman	4
The False One	5				
The Knight of Malta	9				
Valentinian	4				

[*] Whimsical as this classing of our authors' plays must appear it is surely more whimsical that Mr Seward could not find a place in either class for those excellent comedies, The Mad Lover and The Humorous Lieutenant.—Ed. 1778.

CLASS II.

Tragedies and Tragi-Comedies.	Vol.	*Burlesque Sublime.*		*Comedies.*	Vol.
Laws of Candy	3			The Maid in the Mill	13
Loyal Subject	6			Fair Maid of the Inn	9
The Island Princess	6			Wild-Goose Chase	10
Thierry and Theodoret	12			Monsieur Thomas	6
Wife for a Month	8			The Chances	7
Bonduca	6			Honest Man's Fortune	11
				Custom of the Country	2
				Beggar's Bush	3
				The Captain	9
				The Sea-Voyage	7
				Love's Cure, or the Martial Maid	8
				Coxcomb	9
		The Knight of the Burning Pestle	1	Woman-Hater	10
				Wit at several Weapons	11
				Women Pleased	9
				Tamer Tamed	5
				Scornful Lady	2

CLASS III.

	Vol.		Vol.		Vol.
The Coronation	14	Mask	14	Pilgrim	5
The Queen of Corinth	10	Moral Representations	11	Love's Pilgrimage	13
The Lovers' Progress	13			Night-Walker	14
The Prophetess	7			Noble Gentleman	7
Cupid's Revenge	11				

The reader will find many excellent things in this last class, for the plays of our authors do not differ from each other near so much as those of Shakspeare. The three last tragedies are detruded so low on account of their magic and machinery, in which our authors fall shorter of Shakspeare than in any other of their attempts to imitate him. What is the reason of this? Is it that their genius, improved by literature and polite conversation, could well describe men and manners, but had not that poetic, that creative power, to form new beings and new worlds,

———"and give to airy nothings
A local habitation and a name,"———

as Shakspeare excellently describes his own genius? I believe not. The enthusiasm of passions which Beaumont and Fletcher are so frequently rapt into, and the vast variety of distinguished characters which they have so admirably drawn, shew as strong powers of invention as the creation of witches and raising of ghosts. Their deficiency, therefore, in magic, is accountable from a cause far different from a poverty of imagination; it was the accidental disadvantage of a liberal and learned education. Sorcery, witchcraft, astrology, ghosts, and apparitions, were then the universal belief of both the great vulgar and the small, nay, they were even the parliamentary, the national creed; only some early enlightened minds saw and contemned the whole superstitious trumpery. Among these our authors were probably initiated from their school-days into a deep-grounded contempt of it, which breaks out in many parts of their works, and particularly in The Bloody Brother and The Fair Maid of the Inn, where they began that admirable banter which the excellent Butler carried on exactly in the same strain, and which, with such a second, has at last drove the bugbears from the minds of almost all men of common understanding. But here was our authors' disadvantage; the taste of their age called aloud for the assistance of ghosts and sorcery to heighten the horror of tragedy; this horror they had never felt, never heard of but with contempt, and consequently they had no archetypes in their own breasts of what they were called on to describe. Whereas Shakspeare,

from his low education,[3] had believed and felt all the horrors he painted; for, though the universi-

[3] *Shakspeare, from his low education.*] The gentleman[4] who is most obliged to Shakspeare, and to whom Shakspeare is most obliged of any man living, happening to see the sheet of the preface where Shakspeare's peculiar superiority over our authors in his magic is ascribed to the accidental advantage of a low education, he could not well brook a passage which seemed to derogate from his favourite. As Shakspeare had as good sense as our authors, he thought he would be as free from real superstition. This does not always follow; education will tincture even the brightest parts. There is proof that our authors held all sorcery, witchcraft, &c., as mere juggler's tricks, but not the least room to doubt of Shakspeare's having believed them in his youth, whatever he did afterwards, and this is all that is asserted. Is this, therefore, a derogation? No, it only shews the amazing power of his genius; a genius which could turn the bugbears of his former credulity into the noblest poetic machines. Just as Homer built his machinery on the superstitions which he had been bred up to. Both indeed gave great distinction of characters, and great poetic dignity to the dæmons they introduce; nay, they form some new ones, but the system they build on is the vulgar creed. And here (after giving due praise to the gentleman above, for restoring Shakspeare's magic to its genuine horror, out of that low buffoonery which former actors and managers of theatres had flung it into) I shall shew in what light Shakspeare's low education always appeared to me, by the following epitaph wrote many years since, and published in Mr Dodsley's Miscellany:

Upon Shakspeare's Monument at Stratford upon Avon.

Great Homer's birth sev'n rival cities claim,
Too mighty such monopoly of fame;
Yet not to birth alone did Homer owe
His wond'rous worth; what Egypt could bestow,
With all the schools of Greece and Asia join'd,
Enlarged th' immense expansion of his mind.
Nor yet unrivall'd the Mæonian strain,
The British eagle[5] and the Mantuan swan,
Tow'r equal heights. But, happier Stratford, thou
With incontested laurels deck thy brow;

[4] Sir Thomas Hanmer, the worst of all editors.

[5] Milton.

ties and inns of court were in some degree freed from these dreams of superstition, the banks of the Avon were then haunted on every side:

> "There tript with printless foot the elves of hills,
> Brooks, lakes, and groves; there Sorcery bedimm'd
> The noon-tide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
> And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault
> Set roaring war," &c. *Tempest.*

So that Shakspeare can scarcely be said to create a new world in his magic; he went but back to his native country, and only dressed their goblins in poetic weeds; hence even Theseus is not attended by his own deities,[5] Minerva, Venus, the fauns, satyrs, &c., but by Oberon and his fairies; whereas our authors, however awkwardly they treat of ghosts and sorcerers, yet, when they get back to Greece, (which was as it were their native soil) they introduce the classic deities with ease and dignity, as Fletcher in particular does in his Faithful Shepherdess, and both of them in their Masques; the last of which is put in the third class, not from any deficiency in the composition, but from the nature of the allegorical Masque, which, when no real characters are intermixed, ought in general to

> Thy bard was thine unschool'd, and from thee brought
> More than all Egypt, Greece, or Asia, taught;
> Not Homer's self such matchless laurels won,
> The Greek has rivals, but thy Shakspeare none.—
> *Seward.*

The above note was inserted as a postscript to Seward's Preface.—Ed. 1778.

[5] Mr Seward does not seem to have recollected, that, in The Two Noble Kinsmen, there is an equal mixture of Gothic and Grecian manners. It was the common error of all our old English writers, from Chaucer to Milton, who has introduced chivalry even into Paradise Lost.—Ed. 1778.

rank below tragedy and comedy. Our authors, who wrote them because they were in fashion, have themselves shewed how light they held them:

> " They must commend their king, and speak in praise
> Of the assembly; bless the bride and bridegroom
> In person of some god; they're tied to rules
> Of flattery."—— *Maid's Tragedy,* Act I. Sc. I.

This was probably wrote by Beaumont with an eye to the Masque at Gray's Inn, as well as masques in general. The reader will find a farther account of our authors' plays, and what share Mr Shirley is supposed to have had in the completion of some that were left imperfect, in Mr Sympson's Lives of the Authors.[6] But before I finish my account of them, it is necessary to apologise for a fault which must shock every modest reader: It is their frequent use of gross and indecent expressions. They have this fault in common with Shakspeare, who is sometimes more gross than they ever are; but I think grossness does not occur quite so often in him. In the second class of parallel passages, where the hands of Shakspeare and our authors were not distinguishable, I omitted one instance for decency sake, but I will insert it here, as proper to the subject we are now upon. Philaster being violently agitated by jealousy, and firmly believing his mistress to have been loose, thus speaks of a letter which he has just received from her:

> "Oh, let all women
> That love black deeds learn to dissemble here!
> Here, by this paper, she doth write to me,
> As if her heart were mines of adamant
> To all the world beside; but unto me,
> A maiden snow that melted with my looks."
> *Vol. XII. page* 185.

[6] Which Sympson never furnished.

Strength and delicacy are here in perfect union. In like manner Posthumus in Cymbeline, Act II., agitated by as violent a jealousy of his wife, thus describes her seeming modesty:

-"Oh, vengeance! vengeance
Me of my lawful pleasure she restrain'd,
And pray'd me oft forbearance, did it with
A pudency so rosy, the sweet look on't
Might well have warm'd old Saturn; that I thought her
As chaste as unsunn'd snow."

This is a most amiable picture of conjugal delicacy, but it may be justly objected, that it draws the curtains of the marriage-bed, and exposes it to the view of the world; and if the reader turns to the speech of which it is a part, he will find much grosser expressions in the sequel. But these were so far from offending the ears of our ancestors, that Beaumont and Fletcher, though so often guilty of them, are perpetually celebrated by the writers of their own and of the following age, as the great reformers of the drama from bawdry and ribaldry. Thus, when Fletcher's charming pastoral, The Faithful Shepherdess, had been damned by its first night's audience, Jonson says that they damned it for want of the vicious and bawdy scenes which they had been accustomed to, and then breaks out in a rapture worthy of Jonson, worthy of Fletcher:

"I that am glad thy innocence was thy guilt,
And wish that all the muses blood was spilt
In such a martyrdom, to vex their eyes
Do crown thy murder'd poem," &c.

Yet even this pattern of chastity is not free from expressions which would now be justly deemed too gross for the stage. Sir John Berkenhead, speaking of Fletcher's works in general, says—

"And as thy thoughts were clear, so innocent,
Thy fancy gave no unswept language vent,
Slander'st no laws, prophan'st no holy page,
As if thy[7] father's crosier ruled the stage."

Our poets frequently boast of this chastity of language themselves. See the prologue to The Knight of the Burning Pestle. Lovelace, a poet of no small eminence, speaks of the great delicacy of expression even in the Custom of the Country :—

"View here a loose thought said with such a grace,
Minerva might have spoke in Venus' face,
So well disguised, that 'twas conceived by none
But Cupid had Diana's linen on."

Yet of this play Dryden asserts that it contains more bawdry than all his plays together. What must we say of these different accounts? Why, 'tis clear as day, that the style of the age was so changed, that what was formerly not esteemed in the least degree indecent, was now become very much so; just as in Chaucer, the very filthiest words are used without disguise, and, says Beaumont in excuse for him, he gave those expressions to low characters, with whom they were then in common use, and whom he could not therefore draw naturally without them. The same plea is now necessary for Beaumont himself and all his contemporary dramatic poets; but there is this grand and essential difference between the gross expressions of our old poets, and the more delicate lewdness of modern plays. In the former, gross expressions are generally the language of low life, and are given to characters which are set in despicable lights: In the latter, lewdness is frequently the characteristic of the hero of the comedy, and so intended to inflame the passions and cor-

[7] Fletcher, bishop of London.—*Seward.*

rupt the heart. Thus much is necessary in defence, not only of our authors, but of Mr Sympson and myself, for engaging in the publication of works which contain a great many indecencies, which we could have wished to have been omitted; and which, when I began to prepare my part of the work for the press, I had actually struck off, as far as I could do it without injuring the connection of the context; but the booksellers pressed, and indeed insisted upon their restoration: They very sensibly urged the last-mentioned plea, and thought that the bare notion of a curtailed edition would greatly prejudice the sale of it. We hope therefore that the reader will not be too severe on the editors of works which have great excellencies, and which in general tend to promote virtue and chastity, though the custom of the age made the authors not entirely abstain from expressions not then esteemed gross, but which now must offend every modest ear.

Hitherto we have treated of our authors and their merit, something must be added of the attempt of the present editors to clear them from that mass of confusion and obscurity flung upon them by the inaccuracy of former editors, or what was worse, by the wilfulness and ignorance of our old players, who kept most of their plays many years in manuscript as mere play-house properties, to be changed and mangled by every new actor's humour and fancy. As this was the case of most of our old plays, the learned Mr Upton seems strangely mistaken in asserting that no more liberty ought to be taken in the correction of the old [mangled] text of Shakspeare, than with the two first [accurate] editions of Paradise Lost. Upon this groundless assertion are built those very undeserved reflections upon the eminent editors of Shakspeare, who are compared to the vice of the old comedy beating their

author's original text with their daggers of lath. Surely something very different from such sarcasm is due from every true lover of Shakspeare to those editors whose emendations have cleared so many obscurities, and made so many readers study and perceive innumerable excellencies which had otherwise been passed over unnoted and perhaps despised. For verbal criticism, when it means the restoring the true reading to the mangled text, very justly holds the palm from every other species of criticism, as it cannot be performed with success without comprehending all the rest; it must clearly perceive the style, manner, characters, beauties, and defects; and to this must be added some sparks of that original fire that animated the poet's own invention. No sooner, therefore, were criticisms wrote on our English poets, but each deep-read scholar, whose severer studies had made him frown with contempt on poems and plays, was taken in to read, to study, to be enamoured: He rejoiced to try his strength with the editor, and to become a critic himself: Nay, even Dr Bentley's strange absurdities in his notes on Milton had this good effect, that they engaged a Pearce[8] to answer, and perhaps were the first motives to induce the greatest poet, the most universal genius,[9] one of the

[8] Dr Zachary Pearce, late Bishop of Rochester.—*Reed.*

[9] Mr Seward here ascribes to Bentley's notes on Milton consequences which they did not produce: Mr Pope's edition of Shakspeare appeared several years before Bentley published his edition of Milton; and, from the date and contents of the celebrated Letter of Bishop Warburton to Concannen (which, although it has not yet found its way to the press, Dr Akenside says, "will probably be remembered as long as any of this prelate's writings,") it manifestly appears, that the notes of that learned editor were, what he asserts them in his preface to have been, "among his younger amusements," and consequently prior to the publication of Bentley's Milton.—*Reed.*

greatest orators, and one of the most industrious scholars in the kingdom, each to become editors of Shakspeare. A Pope, a Warburton, and a Hanmer did honour to the science by engaging in criticism; but the worth of that science is most apparent from the distinction Mr Theobald gained in the learned world, who had no other claim to honour but as a critic on Shakspeare. In this light his fame remains fresh and unblasted, though the lightning of Mr Pope and the thunder of Mr Warburton have been both launched at his head. Mr Pope being far too great an original himself to submit his own taste to that of Shakspeare's was fairly driven out of the field of criticism by the plain force of reason and argument; but he soon retired to his poetic citadel, and from thence played such a volley of wit and humour on his antagonist, as gave him a very grotesque profile on his left; but he never drove him from his hold on Shakspeare, and his countenance on that side is still clear and unspotted. Mr Warburton's attack was more dangerous; but though he was angry from the apprehension of personal injuries, yet his justice has still left Mr Theobald in possession of great numbers of excellent emendations, which will always render his name respectable. The mention of the merit of criticism in establishing the taste of the age, in raising respect in the contemptuous, and attention in the careless readers of our old poets, naturally leads us to an enquiry, whence it comes to pass, that whilst almost every one buys and reads the works of our late critical editors, nay almost every man of learning aims at imitating them and making emendations himself, yet it is still the fashion to flurt at the names of critic and commentator, and almost to treat the very science with derision. The enquiry has been often made by critics themselves,

and all have said, that it was owing to the strange mistakes and blunders of former critics, to men's engaging in a science which they had neither learning nor talents to manage and adorn. Each thinking himself exempt from the censure, and each having it retorted upon him in his turn. If this is the case, I am afraid all remedy is hopeless; if the great names above-mentioned did really want abilities for the province they undertook, who shall dare to hope that he possesses them? If frequent mistakes in an editor are totally to sink his merit, who can escape the common wreck?—But I am far from thinking this to be the sole or even the principal cause; and the two, which I shall assign as much greater inlets to this disgrace on the art of criticism, are such as admit of the easiest remedy in the world, a remedy in the power of critics themselves, and which their own interest loudly calls on them all to apply. The first cause is, that in a science the most fallible of all others, depending in a great measure on the tottering bottom of mere conjecture, almost every critic assumes the air of certainty, positiveness, and infallibility; he seems sure never to miss his way, though in a wilderness of confusion, never to stumble in a path always gloomy, and sometimes as dark as midnight. Hence he dogmatizes, when he should only propose, and dictates his guesses in the despotic style. The reader, and every rival editor, catches the same spirit, all his faults become unpardonable, and the demerit of a few mistakes shall overwhelm the merit of all his just emendations: He deems himself perfect, and perfection is demanded at his hands; and this being no where else found but by each writer in his own works, every putter-forth of two or three emendations swells as big, and flings his spittle as liberally on a Warburton, a Hanmer, or a Theobald, as if he

were the giant and they the dwarfs of criticism; and he has, upon the supposition of perfection being necessary, this evident advantage of them, that an editor of three or four emendations has a much better chance to avoid mistakes than the editors of three or four thousand; though it has generally happened, that they who were very obscure in merit have had their demerits as glaring as the most voluminous editors.

From the same source arises the second still more remarkable cause of critical disgrace; it is the ill language and ungentleman-like treatment which critics have so frequently given their rivals. If the professors of the same science are continually cuffing and buffeting each other, the world will set them on, laugh at, and enjoy the ridiculous scuffle. Is it not amazing, that ignorant, absurd, blundering dunces and blockheads should be the common epithets and titles that gentlemen of learning and liberal education bestow on each other, for such mistakes as they know that all their brother critics have been constantly guilty of, and which nothing but the vainest self-sufficiency can make them suppose themselves exempt from?

——————— *eheu*
Quam temere in nosmet legem sancimus iniquam?

If we ourselves are guilty of the very same sort of mistakes for which we stigmatize others as blunderers and blockheads, we brand our own foreheads by our own verdict, obloquy upon us is bare justice, and we become blunderers and blockheads upon record. The first remarkable introducer[1] of critical editions of our English poets thought his superior learning gave him a right to tyrannize and

[1] Dr Bentley.—*Reed.*

trample upon all his rival editors; but having none to exercise his fury upon, in his edition of Paradise Lost, he raised a phantom editor, in the person of whom he flung dirt upon Milton himself. But the present worthy Bishop of Bangor* not only cleared his beloved poet from such unjust aspersions, but shewed that he could answer slander, sneer, and obloquy, with decency, candour, and good manners. Happy had it been for the learned world, had those excellent notes been at first joined to Milton's text; that his candour, and not the other's coarseness, might have been the standard of critical language; but as great part of those notes are now engrafted into Dr Newton's elegant edition, it is to be hoped that they will henceforth become so. Happy for us had it been too, if Sir Thomas Hanmer had carried on that candour and good manners which appear in his preface into a body of notes upon his author; he had not only placed his emendations in a much fairer and more conspicuous light; he had not only avoided the objection which some have made of an arbitrary insertion of his alterations into the text; but he would have set us an example of elegance and politeness of style, which we must perhaps in vain hope for from any man, that has not been long exercised in one of the great schools of rhetoric, the houses of parliament, unless some other eminent orator or another speaker should become an editor, as well as a patron of criticisms. Mr Theobald, who was a much better critic on Shakspeare than Dr Bentley had been Milton, yet followed the doctor's style and manne and in some measure deserved the lash he smarted under in the Dunciad; for though he had a right to correct Mr Pope's errors upon Shakspeare, he

* Afterwards Bishop of Rochester.—*Reed.*

had none to use so exalted a character with the least disrespect, much less with derision and contempt. Mr Upton, a gentleman of very distinguished literature, has, in his Remarks on Shakspeare, followed this style of triumph and insult over his rival critics, and as this gentleman will, I hope, long continue his services to the learned world, I will endeavour to convince him of the injustice and ill policy of such treatment of them. The best canon to judge of an editor's merits seems to be a computation of the good and bad alterations which he has made in the text; if the latter are predominant he leaves his author worse than he found him, and demerits only appear at the bottom of the account: If the good are most numerous, put the bad ones on the side of debtor, balance the whole, and we shall easily see what praises are due to him. Now if some hundred good ones remain upon balance to each of the three last editors of Shakspeare, how unjust is it for a publisher of only thirty or forty alterations (supposing them all to be perfectly just) to speak with contempt of those whose merits are so much more conspicuous than his own? But to do this, without an assurance of being himself exempt from the like mistakes, is as impolitic as it is unjust. I have not now time for an examination of this gentleman's criticisms on Shakspeare; but I will choose a very particular specimen of his mistakes, for it shall be the very same which a real friend of this gentleman published as a specimen of his excellencies, in Mr Dodsley's Musæum, a monthly pamphlet then in great repute. This specimen consisted of two alterations, which the letter-writer thought very happy ones. The first was in Antony and Cleopatra, act ii. scene iv. The Soothsayer thus advises Antony to shun the society of Cæsar:—

——"O, Antony, stay not by his side.
Thy dæmon, that's thy spirit which keeps thee, is
Noble, courageous, high, unmatchable,
Where Cæsar's is not. But near him thy angel
Becomes a fear"——

i. e. becomes not only fearful but even fear itself. The image is extremely poetical; for as Antony's dæmon was, according to the heathen theology, personized, and made something different from Antony, so the passion of fear is not only personized, but even pluralized: The imagination beholds many fears, and Antony's spirit becomes one of them. Thus doubts and fears are personized in Macbeth, and become his vexatious companions:—

-"I'm cabin'd, cribb'd, bound in
To sawcy doubts and fears."

Thus God himself personizes fear, and sends it among the Canaanites as the harbinger of Israel. Exodus xxiii and xxvii. And again in Ezekiel xxx. 13. He says, "I will put a fear in the land of Egypt." Thus the companions of Mars in Homer are Δεῖμος τ' ἠδὲ Φόβος. Δ. 440. Terror and fear. But the instance the most apposite is in the Maid's Tragedy, where the forlorn Aspatia sees her servant working the story of Theseus and Ariadne, and thus advises her to punish the perfidy of the former:—

"In this place work a quick-sand,
And over it a shallow smiling water,
And his ship ploughing it; and then *a fear*,
Do that *fear* bravely."

Here though fear could only in painting be expressed on their countenances, yet poetry goes farther,

——"And gives to airy nothings
A local habitation and a name."

These are those great strokes which a man must be born with a soul to perceive as well as write, otherwise not all the reading of an Upton or a Bentley can give the least idea of them. These are those inimitable graces of poetry which a critic's pencil should no more dare to retouch than a modern painter should the cheek or eye of a Raphael's Madona. For see how flat and dim it will appear in this gentleman's celebrated alteration: he reads,

——"But near him thy angel
Becomes *afear'd.*"

How should we have flattened our authors if we had, as the Rehearsal calls it, *transprosed* them in the like manner?

"In this place work a quick-sand,
And over it a shallow smiling water,
And his ship ploughing it, and them *afear'd*;
Do their *fear* bravely."——

The second instance quoted in the Musæum as a proof of Mr Upton's excellency, is his alteration of another of Shakspeare's peculiar graces in the following celebrated passage:—

"Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot:
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice."

The epithet *delighted* in the fourth line is extremely beautiful, as it carries on the fine antithesis between the joys of life and the horrors of death.

This sensible warm motion must become a knead-ed clod, and this spirit, delighted as it has hitherto been with the soothing delicacies of sense and the pleasing ecstasies of youthful fancy, must bathe in fiery floods. This is peculiarly proper from a youth just snatched from revelry and wantonness to suffer the anguish and horror of a shameful death. But this beautiful sense not being seen, Mr Upton makes the first editor surprisingly blind indeed, for he says that he did not see the absurdity of a spirit's being *delighted to bathe in fiery floods.* Upon supposition therefore of this absurdity being chargeable on the old text, he alters *delighted* spirit to *delinquent* spirit,—a change which totally loses the whole spirit of the poet's original sentiment. These are such mistakes, that neither the most extensive literature nor the accuracy of a Locke's judgment can secure a man from; nor indeed any thing but a poetic taste, a soul that

"Is of imagination all compact,"

that can follow Shakspeare in his stupendous flights,

"And shoot from earth to Heav'n, from Heav'n to earth."
Midsummer Night's Dream.

But should such a genius contemn and deride men of cooler reason and superior knowledge? No; nor should the deep-read scholar despise him. Great learning and quickness of parts very rarely meet in one breast: When they do, they are excellent indeed; but separately they are extremely valuable. Far, therefore, from contempt or variance, they should, like sister-sciences, love and accord, and each in honour prefer the other to itself. Mr Upton possesses the first of these characters in a very

eminent degree, and the[3] learned world have only to complain of his imposing mere conjectures upon them for absolute certainties, and of his rough treatment of his brother critics, and then to acknowledge its obligations to him for many judicious criticisms and emendations on Shakspeare and other authors. Shakspeare alone is a vast garden of criticism, where though the editors have pulled up great numbers of weeds, and the view is much improved, yet many are still left, and each of the editors have mistakingly pulled up some flowers which want to be replaced. And this will be the fate of every critic who knows not every single word, history, custom, trade, &c that Shakspeare himself knew, which, at this distance of time, is next to an impossibility. What room therefore for quarrels and insults upon each other? *Veniam petimusque damusque* should be our general rule and motto. Without this we in this edition stand self-condemned. Beaumont and Fletcher are another field of criticism next in beauty to Shakspeare, and, like him, over-run with weeds, many of which are, we hope, now rooted out; and some real flowers, we fear, mistakingly pluckt up with them. Far, therefore, from the least pretence to perfection, from the least right to impose our conjectures as infallible, we have only inserted those in the text which, for the reasons assigned in the notes, appeared more probable than the former readings. We have endeavoured to give fair play to the old text, by turning it on every side, and allowing it all the interpretations we could possibly affix to the words, and where it appeared corrupt, we never inserted our own reading without

[3] Seward here introduces a very long note, to refute sundry opinions of Upton on scriptural topics. As nothing can be more distant from our subject, we have omitted it.—Ed. 1778.

giving what we thought a probable account of the method how such a change had been before made. At least, as I can properly speak for myself only, these were the rules I always wish to have followed, and endeavoured to follow, as soon as I became a principal in the work. But the share which I had in it gives not the least room for any thing like completion on my part. The assistance which I gave Mr Theobald and Mr Sympson, who published about two-thirds of the work, was, by necessary avocations, intermitted through several plays, and the others more or less attended to, as business or company would permit, or as the plays seemed more or less to deserve attention. To what I printed myself, I only dedicated some few of the many leisure hours which I had in a country village, hoping for pardon for the idleness rather than merit from the usefulness of the work. If these notes should ever go through a second edition, I shall gratefully acknowledge any emendations either of them or the text of our authors, which any reader will favour me with; and must say to each,

Si quid novisti rectius istis,
Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.

COMMENDATORY POEMS

PREFIXED TO THE FOLIO OF 1647.

The chief merit which can entitle the greater part of these poems to a place in an edition of our authors, is their being strong testimonials of the esteem, friendship, and admiration which our poets enjoyed, particularly among their literary contemporaries and immediate successors. They also exhibit what may be called the town-talk of those days respecting Beaumont and Fletcher and their great dramatic rivals. For these reasons, it has been thought better to preserve the whole of those prefixed to the original folio, according to the order in which they appear, and to add one or two of a later date. In the second folio, only eleven were selected out of the thirty-seven; in the edition of 1711, they were all retained but one, and the verses of Beaumont and Jonson on The Faithful Shepherdess were added. Seward selected twenty-three from these, and added Fletcher's verses prefixed to Beaumont's Poems. The last editors retained Seward's selection, adding the verses of Gardiner

and Hills, and an extract from Fenton's epistle to Southerne. The poems which refer to particular plays will be found in the volumes where those plays occur, and the same course has been pursued with regard to Beaumont's Poems.[1]

[1] Vol. XIV. See also The Faithful Shepherdess, vol. IV., Monsieur Thomas, vol. VI., and The Wild-Goose Chace, vol. X.

COMMENDATORY POEMS.

To the Stationer.

TELL the sad world that now the labouring press
Has brought forth safe a child of happiness;
The frontispiece[2] will satisfy the wise
And good so well, they will not grudge the price.
'Tis not all kingdoms joined in one could buy
(If prized aright) so true a library
Of man: where we the characters may find
Of every nobler and each baser mind.
Desert has here reward in one good line
For all it lost, for all it might repine;
Vile and ignobler things are open laid,
The truth of their false colours are displayed:
You'll say the poet's both best judge and priest,
No guilty soul abides so sharp a test
As their smooth pen; for what these rare men writ
Commands the world, both honesty and wit.

GRANDISON.

[2] *The frontispiece.*] Alluding to the portrait of Fletcher prefixed to the first folio.

In Memory of Mr JOHN FLETCHER.

METHOUGHT our Fletcher weary of this crowd,
Wherein so few have wit, yet all are loud,
Unto Elysium fled, where he alone
Might his own wit admire, and ours bemoan;
But soon upon those flowery banks a throng,
Worthy of those even numbers which he sung,
Appeared, and though those ancient laureates strive
When dead themselves, whose raptures should survive,
For his temples all their own bays allows,
Not shamed to see him crowned with naked brows;
Homer his beautiful Achilles named,
Urging his brain with Jove's might well be famed,
Since it brought forth one full of beauty's charms,
As was his Pallas, and as bold in arms;
But when he the brave Arbases[3] saw, one
That saved his people's dangers by his own,
And saw Tigranes by his hand undone
Without the help of any Myrmidon,
He then confess'd, when next he'd Hector stay,
That he must borrow him from Fletcher's play;
This might have been the shame, for which he bid
His Iliads in a nut-shell should be hid.
Virgil of his Æneas next begun,
Whose God-like form and tongue so soon had won
The queen of Carthage, and of beauty too,
Two powers the whole world else were slaves unto;
Urging that prince, for to repair his fault
On earth, boldly in hell his mistress sought:
But when he Amintor[4] saw revenge that wrong,
For which the sad Aspatia sighed so long,
Upon himself, to shades hasting away,
Not for to make a visit, but a stay;
He then did modestly confess how far
Fletcher outdid him in a character.
Now, lastly, for a refuge, Virgil shows
The lines where Corydon Alexis wooes;
But those, in opposition, quickly met
The smooth-tongued Perigot and Amoret;[5]
A pair whom, doubtless, had the others seen,
They from their own loves had apostates been:

[3] King and no King. [4] The Maid's Tragedy.
[5] The Faithful Shepherdess. *Orig. Notes.*

Thus Fletcher did the fam'd laureat exceed,
Both when his trumpet sounded, and his reed.
Now if the ancients yield that heretofore
None worthier than those e'er laurels wore;
The least our age can say, now thou art gone,
Is, that there never will be such a one:
And since to express thy works our lines too narrow be,
To help it we'll be ample in our prophecy.

H. HOWARD.

On Mr JOHN FLETCHER *and his Works, never before published.*

To flatter living fools is easy sleight,
But hard, to do the living-dead men right.
To praise a landed lord is gainful art;
But thankless to pay tribute to desert.
This should have been my task: I had intent
To bring my rubbish to thy monument,
To stop some crannies there, but that I found
No need of least repair; all firm and sound.
Thy well-built fame doth still itself advance
Above the world's mad zeal and ignorance.
Though thou diedst not possess'd of that same pelf,
Which nobler souls call dirt, the city, wealth;
Yet thou hast left unto the times so great
A legacy, a treasure so complete,
That 'twill be hard, I fear, to prove thy will:
Men will be wrangling, and in doubting still,
How so vast sums of wit were left behind;
And yet nor debts, nor sharers, they can find.
'Twas the kind providence of Fate to lock
Some of this treasure up; and keep a stock
For a reserve until these sullen days;
When scorn, and want, and danger, are the bays
That crown the head of merit. But now he,
Who in thy will hath part, is rich and free.
But there's a caveat enter'd by command,
None should pretend, but those can understand.

HENRY MOODY, Bart.[6]

[6] Sir Henry Moody was of the number of those gentlemen who had degrees conferred by King Charles the First at his return to ter the battle of Edgehill. The poem has some strong marks t, particularly in these lines—

ON MR FLETCHER'S *Works*.

THOUGH poets have a license which they use
As the ancient privilege of their free muse,
Yet whether this be leave enough for me
To write, great bard, an eulogy for thee,
Or whether to commend thy work, will stand
Both with the laws of verse and of the land,
Were to put doubts might raise a discontent
Between the muses and the ———.[7]
I'll none of that: There's desperate wits that be
(As their immortal laurel) thunder-free;
Whose personal virtues, 'bove the laws of fate,
Supply the room of personal estate;
And thus enfranchised, safely may rehearse,
Rapt in a lofty strain, their own neck-verse.
For he that gives the bays to thee, must then
First take it from the military men;
He must untriumph conquests, bid 'em stand,
Question the strength of their victorious hand;
He must act new things, or go near the sin,
Reader, as near as you and I have been;
He must be that which he that tries will swear
It is not good being so another year.
  And now that thy great name I've brought to this,
To do it honour is to do amiss.
What's to be done to those that shall refuse
To celebrate, great soul, thy noble muse?

——— "until these sullen days,
When scorn, and want, and danger, are the bays
That crown the head of merit."

I confess myself a great admirer of verses in rhime, whose pauses run into each other as boldly as blank verse itself. When our moderns corrected many faults in the measure of our verse by making the accents always fall on right syllables, and laying aside those harsh elisions used by our ancient poets, they mistook this run of the verses into each other after the manner of Virgil, Homer, &c. for a fault, which deprived our rhime of that grandeur and dignity of numbers which arises from a perpetual change of pauses, and turned whole poems into distichs.—*Seward.*

7 —— *and the* ———.] This lacuna was certainly intended to be filled up with *parliament*. The eulogist, it must be recollected, wrote at the time of the proscription of theatrical representations, when it was considered sinful even to read a stage-play.

Shall the poor state of all those wandering things
Thy stage once raised to emperors and kings;[8]
Shall rigid forfeitures, that reach our heirs,
Of things that only fill with cares and fears;
Shall the privation of a friendless life,
Made up of contradictions and strife;
Shall he be entity would antedate
His own poor name and thine annihilate?
Shall these be judgments great enough for one
That dares not write thee an encomion?
Then where am I? But now I've thought upon't,
I'll praise thee more than all have ventured on't.
I'll take thy noble work, and, like the trade
Where, for a heap of salt, pure gold is laid,
I'll lay thy volume, that huge tome of wit,
About in ladies' closets where they sit
Enthroned in their own wills, and, if she be
A laic sister, she'll strait fly to thee;
But, if a holy habit she have on,
Or be some novice, she'll scarce look upon
Thy lines at first; but watch her then a while,
And you shall see her steal a gentle smile
Upon thy title, put thee nearer yet,
Breathe on thy lines a whisper, and then set
Her voice up to the measures; then begin
To bless the hour and happy state she's in:
Now she lays by her characters, and looks
With a stern eye on all her pretty books.
She's now thy votaress, and the just crown
She brings thee with it is worth half the town.
I'll send thee to the army; they that fight
Will read thy tragedies with some delight,
Be all thy reformadoes, fancy scars,
And pay too in thy speculative wars.
I'll send thy comic scenes to some of those
That for a great while have play'd fast and loose;[9]
New universalists, by changing shapes,
Have made with wit and fortune fair escapes.
Then shall the country, that poor tennis-ball
Of angry fate, receive thy pastorall,

[8] *Shall the poor state of all those wandering things
Thy stage once raised to emperors and kings.*] Alluding to the miserable situation of the actors during the civil wars, when they were deprived of the means of living by their profession.

[9] *Fast and loose.*] A cheating game practised at the time by the gipsies. See vol. VI., p. 300.

And from it learn those melancholy strains
Fed the afflicted souls of primitive swains.
Thus the whole world to reverence will flock
Thy tragic buskin and thy comic sock:[1]
And winged Fame unto posterity
Transmit but only two, this age and thee.

THOMAS PEYTON.
Agricola Anglo Cantianus.[2]

On the deceased Author, Mr JOHN FLETCHER, *his Plays, and especially the Mad Lover.*

WHILST his well organ'd body doth retreat
To its first matter, and the formal heat[3]
Triumphant sits in judgment, to approve
Pieces above our candour, and our love[4]
Such as dare boldly venture to appear
Unto the curious eye and critic ear.
Lo, the Mad Lover in these various times
Is press'd to life, to accuse us of our crimes.
While Fletcher lived, who equal to him writ
Such lasting monuments of natural wit?
Others might draw their lines with sweat, like those
That (with much pains) a garrison inclose,
Whilst his sweet fluent vein did gently run
As uncontroll'd and smoothly as the sun.
After his death, our theatres did make
Him in his own unequal language speak.
And now, when all the muses out of their
Approved modesty silent appear,

[1] *Stock*] So the folio.

[2] This poem, though omitted by the editors of 1750 and 1778, has fully as much merit as most of the productions of this kind. The description of the puritan girl gradually overcoming her scruples, is not without humour. The encomiast seems to have been an unshaken votary of monarchy and the stage, at a time when both were proscribed.

[3] *And the* formal heat, &c.] *Formal heat* I take to be a metaphysical and logical term for the *soul*, as the *formal cause* is that which constitutes the essence of any thing. Fletcher's soul therefore now sits in judgment, to approve works deserving of praise.—*Seward.*

[4] *Pieces above our* candour] Amended by Theobald.

This play of Fletcher's braves the envious light,
As wonder of our ears once, now our sight.
Three-and-four-fold-blest poet, who the lives
Of poets, and of theatres, survives!
A groom, or ostler of some wit, may bring
His Pegasus to the Castalian spring;
Boast, he a race o'er the Pharsalian plain,
Or happy Tempe-valley, dares maintain:
Brag, at one leap, upon the double cliff
(Were it as high as monstrous Teneriffe)
Of far-renown'd Parnassus he will get,
And there (to amaze the world) confirm his seat:
When our admired Fletcher vaunts not aught,
And slighted every thing he writ as nought:
While all our English wond'ring world (in's cause)
Made this great city echo with applause.
Read him, therefore, all that can read; and those
That cannot, learn; if you're not learning's foes,
And wilfully resolved to refuse
The gentle raptures of this happy muse.
From thy great constellation (noble soul!)
Look on this kingdom; suffer not the whole
Spirit of poesy retire to heaven,
But make us entertain what thou hast given.
Earthquakes and thunder diapasons make;
The seas' vast roar, and irresistless shake
Of horrid winds, a sympathy compose;
So in these things there's music in the close:
And though they seem great discords in our ears,
They are not so to them above the spheres.
Granting these music, how much sweeter's that
Mnemosyne's daughters' voices do create?
Since heav'n, and earth, and seas, and air consent
To make an harmony, (the instrument,
Their own agreeing selves) shall we refuse
The music which the deities do use?
Troy's ravish'd Ganymede doth sing to Jove,
And Phœbus' self plays on his lyre above.
The Cretan gods, or glorious men, who will
Imitate right, must wonder at thy skill,
(Best poet of thy times!) or he will prove
As mad, as thy brave Memnon was with love.

ASTON COKAINE, Bart.[5]

[5] *Aston Cokaine*, Bart.] This gentleman, who claimed being made a baronet by King Charles I., at a time when the king's distress prevented the creation passing the due forms, was a poet of some repute, for which

Upon the Works of BEAUMONT *and* FLETCHER.

How angels (cloistered in our human cells)
Maintain their parley Beaumont-Fletcher tells,
Whose strange inimitable intercourse
Transcends all rules, and flies beyond the force
Of the most forward souls; all must submit
Until they reach these mysteries of wit.
The intellectual language here's express'd,
Admired in better times, and dares the test
Of ours; for from wit, sweetness, mirth, and sense,
This volume springs a new true quintessence.

JO. PETTUS, Knight.[6]

On the Works of the most excellent Dramatic Poet, Mr JOHN FLETCHER, *never before printed.*

HAIL, Fletcher! welcome to the world's great stage;
For our two hours, we have thee here an age
In thy whole works, and may th' impression call
The pretor that presents thy plays to all;
Both to the people, and the lords that sway
That herd, and ladies whom those lords obey.
And what's the loadstone can such guests invite
But moves on two poles, profit and delight?

reason the copy is inserted more than for its intrinsic worth. He was lord of the manors of Pooley, in Polesworth parish, Warwickshire, and of Ashburn, in Derbyshire; but, with a fate not uncommon to wits, spent and sold both; but his descendants of this age have been and are persons of distinguished merit and fortune.—*Seward.*

Sir Aston Cockayne was born in 1608, at Elvaston, in Derbyshire. He suffered greatly during the rebellion for being a catholic. In 1641 he was created a baronet by Charles I. He died at an advanced age in 1684. Besides four plays, he was author of a volume of poems printed in 1658, more valuable on account of the illustrious friends to whom some of them are addressed, than for any intrinsic merit.

[6] Sir John seems to have been one of the gentlemen who were ever ready to furnish their quota to these encomiastic 'libraries of wit,' which the bookseller was anxious to prefix to his editions of authors. He has a copy of verses among the multitude who bewailed the death of Cartwright.

Which will be soon, as on the rack, confest,
When every one is tickled with a jest,
And that pure Fletcher's able to subdue
A melancholy more than Burton knew.[7]
And though upon the bye, to his designs,
The native may learn English from his lines,
And th' alien, if he can but construe it,
May here be made free denison of wit.
But his main end does drooping Virtue raise,
And crowns her beauty with eternal bays,
In scenes where she inflames the frozen soul,
While Vice (her paint wash'd off) appears so foul,
She must this blessed isle and Europe leave,
And some new quadrant of the globe deceive,
Or hide her blushes on the Afric shore,
Like Marius, but ne'er rise to triumph more,
That honour is resign'd to Fletcher's fame,
Add to his trophies, that a poet's name
(Late grown as odious to our modern states,
As that of King to Rome) he vindicates
From black aspersions, cast upon't by those
Which only are inspired to lie in prose.
  And, by the court of muses be't decreed,
What graces spring from poesy's richer seed,
When we name Fletcher, shall be so proclaim'd,
As all, that's royal, is when Cæsar's named.

ROBERT STAPYLTON, Knt.[8]

[7] *And that pure Fletcher, able to subdue*
A melancholy more than Burton knew.] Mr Sympson observed, that the comma stood in the place of 's, *Fletcher is able*. Burton was author of the Anatomy of Melancholy, a folio.—*Seward*.

[8] Sir Robert Stapylton of Carleton in Yorkshire, a poet of much fame, was at the battle of Edgehill with king Charles the First, and had an honorary degree given him at Oxford for his behaviour on that occasion. He wrote the Slighted Maid, a comedy, The Step Mother, a tragi-comedy, and Hero and Leander, a tragedy, besides several poems and translations.—*Seward*.

He was third son to Richard Stapylton, Esq. of Carleton in Yorkshire, and died 10th July, 1669. As a poet, he is, perhaps, one of the most absurd of the heroic dramatists after the Restoration. The Slighted Maid, one of the plays ridiculed in the Rehearsal, is worth perusing for its excessive bombast and absurdity.

To the Memory of my most honoured Kinsman, Mr FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

I'LL not pronounce how strong and clean thou writes,
Nor by what new hard rules thou took'st thy flights,
Nor how much Greek and Latin some refine,
Before they can make up six words of thine;
But this I'll say, thou strik'st our sense so deep,
At once thou mak'st us blush, rejoice, and weep.
Great father Jonson bow'd himself, when he
(Thou writ'st so nobly) vow'd, 'he envied thee.'
Were thy Mardonius arm'd, there would be more
Strife for his sword than all Achilles wore;
Such wise just rage, had he been lately tried,
My life on't he had been o' th' better side;
And, where he found false odds, (through gold or sloth)
There brave Mardonius would have beat them both.
  Behold, here's Fletcher too! the world ne'er knew
Two potent wits co-operate, till you;
For still your fancies are so wov'n and knit,
'Twas Francis Fletcher, or John Beaumont writ,
Yet neither borrow'd, nor were so put to't
To call poor gods and goddesses to do't;
Nor made nine girls your muses (you suppose,
Women ne'er write, save love-letters in prose)
But are your own inspirers, and have made
Such powerful scenes, as, when they please, invade.
Your plot, sense, language, all's so pure and fit,
He's bold, not valiant, dare dispute your wit.

GEORGE LISLE, Knt.[9]

[9] *George Lisle, Knight.*] This I take to be the same with Sir John Lisle, one of king Charles's judges; for Wood, in his index to his Athenæ, calls Sir John by the name of George: He might perhaps have had two Christian names. If this was he, he was admitted at Oxford in the year 1622, seven years after Beaumont's death, and, as he was a kinsman, might be supposed to know more of his compositions than a stranger. His testimony, therefore, adds strength to what has been before advanced concerning Beaumont, nay it does so whether Sir George Lisle be the regicide or not. If he was, he was an eminent lawyer and speaker in the house of commons, and made lord commissioner of the privy-seal by the parliament. After the Restoration he fled to Losanne in Switzerland, where he was treated as lord chancellor of England, which so irritated some furious Irish loyalists, that they shot him dead as he was going to church.—*Seward.*

On Mr John Fletcher's *Works.*

So shall we joy, when all whom beasts and worms
Had turn'd to their own substances and forms,
Whom earth to earth, or fire hath changed to fire,
We shall behold, more than at first entire,
As now we do, to see all thine, thine own
In this thy muse's resurrection:
Whose scatter'd parts, from thy own race, more wounds
Hath suffer'd, than Acteon from his hounds;
Which first their brains, and then their bellies, fed,
And from their excrements new poets bred.
But now thy muse enraged from her urn,
Like ghosts of murder'd bodies, doth return
To accuse the murderers, to right the stage,
And undeceive the long-abused age;
Which casts thy praise on them, to whom thy wit
Gives not more gold than they give dross to it:
Who, not content like felons to purloin,
Add treason to it, and debase thy coin.
But whither am I stray'd? I need not raise
Trophies to thee from other men's dispraise;
Nor is thy fame on lesser ruins built,
Nor needs thy juster title the foul guilt
Of Eastern kings, who, to secure their reign,
Must have their brothers, sons, and kindred slain
Then was Wit's empire at the fatal height,[1]
When, labouring and sinking with its weight,
From thence a thousand lesser poets sprung,
Like petty princes from the fall of Rome;
When Jonson, Shakspeare, and thyself did sit,
And sway'd in the triumvirate of Wit.

[1] *Wit's empire at the fatal height.*] i. e. The highest pitch which Fate allows it to rise to.—The following account of Shakspeare, Jonson, and Fletcher, though rather too favourable to the last, is as much preferable to all the former poets' encomiums as Sir John was preferable to them in abilities as a poet.—*Seward.*

Sir John Denham's compliment is however of little value, as he transfers it, in the true spirit of eulogists, to Cowley, in his verses on the death of that poet:—

Old mother Wit, and Nature gave
Shakspeare and Fletcher all they have;
In Spenser, and in Jonson, art
Of slower Nature got the start;
But both in him so equal are,
None knows which bears the happiest share.

Yet what from Jonson's oil and sweat did flow,
Or what more easy Nature did bestow
On Shakspeare's gentler muse, in thee full grown
Their graces both appear; yet so, that none
Can say, here Nature ends and Art begins;
But mixt, like th' elements, and born like twins;
So interweav'd, so like, so much the same,
None this mere Nature, that mere Art can name:
'Twas this the ancients meant, Nature and Skill
Are the two tops of their Parnassus hill.

J. DENHAM.

Upon Mr JOHN FLETCHER'S *Plays*.

FLETCHER, to thee, we do not only owe
All these good plays, but those of others too:
Thy wit repeated, does support the stage,
Credits the last, and entertains this age.
No worthies form'd by any muse, but thine,
Could purchase robes to make themselves so fine.
What brave commander is not proud to see
Thy brave Melantius in his gallantry?
Our greatest ladies love to see their scorn
Out-done by thine, in what themselves have worn
Th' impatient widow, ere the year be done,
Sees thy Aspatia weeping in her gown.
I never yet the tragic strain assay'd,
Deterr'd by that inimitable Maid;
And when I venture at the comic style,
Thy Scornful Lady [2] seems to mock my toil:
Thus has thy muse, at once, improved and marr'd
Our sport in plays, by rend'ring it too hard.
So when a sort [3] of lusty shepherds throw
The bar by turns, and none the rest outgo
So far, but that the best are measuring casts,
Their emulation and their pastime lasts;

[2] *Thy* Scornful Lady.] Many great men, as well as Mr Waller, have celebrated this play. Beaumont's hand is visible in some high caricatures, but I must own my dissent to its being called a first-rate comedy. ---*Seward*.

[3] *Sort*.] *i. e.* Company.

But if some brawny yeoman of the guard
Step in, and toss the axle-tree a yard,
Or more, beyond the farthest mark, the rest
Despairing stand, their sport is at the best.

EDW. WALLER.

To FLETCHER *Revived.*

How have I been religious? What strange good
Has 'scaped me, that I never understood?
Have I hell-guarded heresy o'erthrown?
Heal'd wounded states? made kings and kingdoms one?
That Fate should be so merciful to me,
To let me live to have said, "I have read thee."
  Fair star, ascend! the joy, the life, the light
Of this tempestuous age, this dark world's sight!
Oh, from thy crown of glory dart one flame
May strike a sacred reverence, whilst thy name
(Like holy flamens to their god of day)
We, bowing, sing, and whilst we praise, we pray.
  Bright spirit! whose eternal motion
Of wit, like time, still in itself did run,
Binding all others in it, and did give
Commission, how far this, or that, shall live.
Like Destiny,[4] thy poems, who, as she
Signs death to all, herself can never die.

[4] *Like* destiny *of poems, who, as she*
Signs death to all, herself can never dye] This is extremely obscure. He says first, that Fletcher is the spirit of poetry, that he is the god of it and has decreed the fate of all other poems, whether they are to live or dye; after this he is like the destiny of poems, and, living only himself, signs death to all others. This is very high-strained indeed, and rather self-contradictory, for Fletcher's spirit gives commission how far some shall live, and yet signs death to all. A slight change will make somewhat easier and clearer sense. I understand the four first lines thus, Fletcher's poetry is the standard of excellence, whatever is not formed by that model must die, therefore I read, *Like Destiny, thy poems*, i. e. Thy poems being the standard of excellence, are like destiny, which determines the fate of others, but herself remains still the same. I republish this poem, as there are strong marks of genius in it, particularly in some of the following paragraphs.—*Seward.*

And now thy purple-robed tragedy,
In her embroider'd buskins, calls mine eye,
Where brave Aëtius we see betray'd, *Valentinian.*
To obey his death, whom thousand lives obey'd;
Whilst that the mighty fool his scepter breaks,
And through his gen'ral's wounds his own doom speaks;
Weaving thus richly Valentinian,
The costliest monarch with the cheapest man.
Soldiers may here to their old glories add,
The Lover love, and be with reason Mad: *Mad Lover.*
Not as of old Alcides furious,
Who, wilder than his bull, did tear the house;
(Hurling his language with the canvas stone)
'Twas thought the monster roar'd the sob'rer tone.
But ah! when thou thy sorrow didst inspire *Tragi-Comedies.*
With passions black as is her dark attire,
Virgins, as sufferers, have wept to see *Arcas.*
So white a soul, so red a cruelty; *Bellario.*
That thou hast grieved, and, with unthought redress,
Dried their wet eyes who now thy mercy bless;
Yet, loth to lose thy watery jewel, when
Joy wiped it off, laughter strait sprung't again.
Now ruddy-cheeked Mirth with rosy wings *Comedies.*
Fans ev'ry brow with gladness, whilst she sings *Spanish Curate.*
Delight to all; and the whole theatre *Humorous Lieutenant.*
A festival in Heaven doth appear.
Nothing but pleasure, love; and (like the morn) *Tamer Tamed.*
Each face a general smiling doth adorn. *Little French Lawyer.*
Hear, ye foul speakers, that pronounce the air
Of stews and shores,[5] I will inform you where,
And how to clothe aright your wanton wit,
Without her nasty bawd attending it *Custom of the Country.*
View here a loose thought said with such a grace,
Minerva might have spoke in Venus' face;
So well disguised, that 'twas conceived by none,
But Cupid had Diana's linen on;
And all his naked parts so veil'd, they express
The shape with clouding the uncomeliness;
That if this reformation which we
Received, had not been buried with thee,
The stage, as this work, might have lived and loved;
Her lines the austere scarlet had approved;
And the actors wisely been from that offence
As clear, as they are now from audience.

[5] *Shores.*] The modern editors read—*sewers.* The allusion is probably to Shore-ditch, at the time filled with brothels.

Thus with thy genius did the scene expire,
Wanting thy active and enlivening fire,
That now (to spread a darkness over all),
Nothing remains but poesy to fall.
And though from these thy embers we receive
Some warmth, so much as may be said, we live;
That we dare praise thee, blushless, in the head
Of the best piece Hermes to Love e'er read;
That we rejoice and glory in thy wit,
And feast each other with rememb'ring it;
That we dare speak thy thought, thy acts recite:
Yet all men henceforth be afraid to write.

RICH. LOVELACE.[6]

On Mr JOHN FLETCHER'S *Dramatical Poems.*

GREAT tutelary spirit of the stage!
Fletcher! I can fix nothing but my rage
Before thy works, 'gainst their officious crime
Who print thee now, in the worst scene of time.
For me, uninterrupted hadst thou slept
Among the holy shades, and close hadst kept
The mistery of thy lines, till men might be
Taught how to read, and then how to read thee.
But now thou art exposed to th' common fate;
Revive, then, mighty soul, and vindicate
From th' age's rude affronts thy injured fame,
Instruct the envious with how chaste a flame

[6] *Rich. Lovelace.*] This gentleman was eldest son of a good family, extremely accomplished, being very eminent for wit, poetry, and music, but still more so for politeness of manners and beauty of person. He had an ample fortune, and every advantage that seemed to promise happiness in life; but his steady attachment to the royal cause, and a liberality that perhaps approached too near profuseness, reduced him to extreme poverty. Something of the gaiety of the soldier appears in the beginning of this poem. His poems were published in 1749.—*Seward.*

He was born at Woolridge in Kent, about 1618, and educated at Oxford. On presenting a petition to the Long Parliament, he was ordered to be confined, and, after his release, formed a regiment of foot for the service of the king of France. On his return, he was again imprisoned, and not released till after the death of Charles I. He died in extreme poverty in Gunpowder-Alley, near Shoe-lane, in 1658.

Thou warm'st the lover; how severely just
Thou wert to punish, if he burnt to lust;
With what a blush thou didst the maid adorn,
But tempted, with how innocent a scorn;
How epidemic errors by thy play
Were laughed out of esteem, so purged away;
How to each sense thou so didst virtue fit
That all grew virtuous to be thought to have wit.
But this was much too narrow for thy art,
Thou didst frame governments, give kings their part,
Teach them how near to God, while just they be,
But how dissolved, stretched forth to tyranny;
How kingdoms, in their channel, safely run,
But rudely overflowing are undone.
Though vulgar spirits poets scorn or hate,
Man may beget, a poet men create.

WILL. HABINGTON.[7]

Upon Master FLETCHER'S *Dramatic Work*

WHAT? now the stage is down, dar'st thou appear,
Bold Fletcher, in this tottering hemisphere?
Yes; poets are like palms, which, the more weight
You cast upon them, grow more strong and streight
'Tis not Jove's thunderbolt, nor Mars his spear,
Or Neptune's angry trident, poets fear.
Had now grim Ben been breathing, with what rage
And high-swoln fury had he lash'd the age;
Shakspeare with Chapman had grown mad, and torn
Their gentle sock, and lofty buskins worn,
To make their muse welter up to the chin
In blood; of feigned scenes no need had been;
England, like Lucian's eagle, with an arrow
Of her own plumes piercing her heart quite thorough,

[7] Habington was a poet of no mean powers. In his collection of poems entitled Castara, he displays considerable energy of thought, combined with tenderness of sentiment and very fluent versification. He was born at Hindlip, in Worcestershire, Nov. 5, 1605, and being a catholic, was educated at St Omer's and Paris. He died Nov. 13, 1645. Besides his poems, he was author of several historical works, and of the Queen of Arragon, a tragi-comedy.

Had been a theatre and subject fit
To exercise in real truths their wit:
Yet none like high-winged Fletcher had been found
This eagle's tragic destiny to sound;
Rare Fletcher's quill had soared up to the sky,
And drawn down gods to see the tragedy.
Live, famous dramatist, let every spring
Make thy bay flourish, and fresh bourgeons[8] bring;
And since we cannot have thee trod o' th' stage,
We will applaud thee in this silent page.

JA. HOWELL. *P. C. C.*[9]

On the Edition.

FLETCHER (whose fame no age can ever waste
Envy of ours, and glory of the last)
Is now alive again; and with his name
His sacred ashes waked into a flame;
Such as before did by a secret charm
The wildest heart subdue, the coldest warm;
And lend the ladies' eyes a power more bright
Dispensing thus to either heat and light.
He to a sympathy those souls betray'd,
Whom love, or beauty, never could persuade,
And in each moved spectator could beget
A real passion by a counterfeit:
When first Bellario bled, what lady there
Did not for every drop let fall a tear?
And when Aspatia wept, not any eye
But seem'd to wear the same sad livery;
By him inspired, the feign'd Lucina drew
More streams of melting sorrow than the true;
But then the Scornful Lady did beguile
Their easy griefs, and teach them all to smile.

[8] *Bourgeons.*] i. e. buds. Fr.

[9] This voluminous and well-known writer was born in 1594, at Abermarlis in Caermarthenshire. He was brought up at Jesus-College, Oxford, and after he had travelled through several countries, was employed in various charges. He died in November, 1666. Of all his numerous works the only one which is still in repute is his Familiar Epistles.

Thus he affections could or raise or lay;
Love, grief, and mirth, thus did his charms obey;
He Nature taught her passions to out-do,
How to refine the old, and create new;
Which such a happy likeness seem'd to bear,
As if that Nature Art, Art Nature were.
Yet all had nothing been, obscurely kept
In the same urn wherein his dust hath slept;
Nor had he ris' the Delphic wreath to claim,
Had not the dying scene expired his name;
Despair our joy hath doubled, he is come;
Thrice welcome by this *post-liminium.*
His loss preserved him; they, that silenced Wit,
Are now the authors to eternize it;
Thus poets are in spite of Fate revived,
And plays by intermission longer-lived.

THO. STANLEY.[1]

On the Edition of Mr FRANCIS BEAUMONT'S *and Mr* JOHN FLETCHER'S *Plays, never printed before.*

I AM amazed; and this same extasy
Is both my glory and apology.
Sober joys are dull passions; they must bear
Proportion to the subject: If so, where
Beaumont and Fletcher shall vouchsafe to be
The subject, that joy must be extasy.
Fury is the complexion of great wits;
The fool's distemper: He, that's mad by fits,
Is wise so too. It is the poet's muse;
The prophet's god; the fool's, and my excuse.
For (in me) nothing less than Fletcher's name
Could have begot, or justified this flame.
Beaumont / Fletcher } return'd! methinks it should not be!
No, not in's works; plays are as dead as he.

[1] Mr Stanley, educated at Pembroke-Hall, Cambridge, was a poet of some eminence, and his verses have merit; and contain a proof of what is asserted in the Preface, of plays being kept unpublished for the benefit of the players.—*Seward.*

He was the son of Sir Thomas Stanley, knight, and was born at Comberlow in Hertfordshire. He was author of a History of Philosophy, and died 12th April, 1678.

The palate of this age gusts[2] nothing high,
That has not custard in't, or bawdery.
Folly and madness fill the stage: The scene
Is Athens; where, the guilty and the mean,
The fool, 'scape well enough; learned and great
Suffer an ostracism; stand exulate.
Mankind is fall'n again, shrunk a degree,
A step below his very apostacy.
Nature herself is out of tune; and sick
Of tumult and disorder, lunatic.
Yet what world would not cheerfully endure
The torture or disease to enjoy the cure?
This book's the balsam, and the hellebore,
Must preserve bleeding Nature, and restore
Our crazy stupor to a just quick sense
Both of ingratitude and providence.
That teaches us (at once) to feel and know
Two deep points; what we want, and what we owe.
Yet great goods have their ills: Should we transmit,
To future times, the power of love and wit,
In this example; would they not combine
To make our imperfections their design?
They'd study our corruptions, and take more
Care to be ill, than to be good, before.
For nothing, but so great infirmity,
Could make them worthy of such remedy.
Have you not seen the sun's almighty ray
Rescue th' affrighted world, and redeem day
From black despair? how his victorious beam
Scatters the storm, and drowns the petty flame
Of lightning, in the glory of his eye,
How full of power, how full of majesty?
When, to us mortals, nothing else was known
But the sad doubt, whether to burn or drown.
Choler, and phlegm, heat, and dull ignorance,
Have cast the people into such a trance,
That fears and danger seem great equally,
And no dispute left now, but how to die.
Just in this nick Fletcher sets the world clear
Of all disorder, and reforms us here.
The formal youth, that knew no other grace,
Or value, but his title and his lace,
Glasses himself, and, in this faithful mirror,
Views, disapproves, reforms, repents his error.

[2] *Gusts.*] Relishes, Fr.

The credulous bright girl, that believes all
Language, in oaths (if good) canonical,
Is fortified, and taught here to beware
Of every specious bait, of every snare
Save one; and that same caution takes her more
Than all the flattery she felt before.
She finds her boxes and her thoughts betray'd
By the corruption of the chamber-maid;
Then throws her washes and dissemblings by,
And vows nothing but ingenuity.
The severe statesman quits his sullen form
Of gravity and business; the lukewarm
Religious, his neutrality; the hot
Brainsick illuminate, his zeal; the sot,
Stupidity; the soldier, his arrears;
The court, its confidence; the *plebs*, their fears:
Gallants, their apishness and perjury;
Women, their pleasure and inconstancy;
Poets, their wine; the usurer, his pelf;
The world, its vanity; and I, myself.

ROGER L'ESTRANGE.[3]

On the Dramatic Poems of Mr JOHN FLETCHER.

WONDER! who's here? Fletcher, long buried,
Revived? 'Tis he! he's risen from the dead;
His winding-sheet put off, walks above ground,
Shakes off his fetters, and is better bound.
And may he not, if rightly understood,
Prove plays are lawful? he hath made them good.
Is any *Lover Mad*? See, here's *Love's Cure*;
Unmarried? to a *Wife* he may be sure,
A rare one, *for a Month*; if she displease,
The *Spanish Curate* gives a writ of ease.
Enquire the *Custom of the Country*, then
Shall the *French Lawyer* set you free again.
If the two *Fair Maids* take it wondrous ill,
(One of the *Inn*, the other of the *Mill*)
That th' *Lovers' Progress* stopt, and they defamed,
Here's that makes *Women Pleased*, and *Tamer Tamed*.

[3] For the same reason that Sir Aston Cokaine's poem is reprinted, Sir Roger L'Estrange's keeps its place. His name is well known to the learned world, but this copy of verses does no great honour either to himself or our authors.—*Seward.*

But who then plays the *Coxcomb?* or will try
His *Wit at several Weapons*, or else die?
Nice Valour, and he doubts not to engage
The *Noble Gentleman* in *Love's Pilgrimage*,
To take revenge on the *False One*, and run
The *Honest Man's Fortune*, to be undone
Like *Knight of Malta*, or else *Captain* be,
Or th' *Humorous Lieutenant*; go to *Sea*
(*A Voyage* for to starve) he's very loth,
Till we are all at peace, to swear an oath,
That then the *Loyal Subject* may have leave
To lie from *Beggar's Bush*, and undeceive
The creditor, discharge his debts; why so,
Since we can't pay to Fletcher what we owe?
Oh, could his *Prophetess* but tell one *Chance*,
When that the *Pilgrims* shall return from France,
And once more make this kingdom as of late,
The *Island Princess*, and we celebrate
A *Double Marriage*; every one to bring
To Fletcher's memory his offering,
That thus at last unsequesters the stage,
Brings back the silver and the golden age!

ROBERT GARDINER.

To the Manes of the celebrated Poets and Fellow-writers, FRANCIS BEAUMONT *and* JOHN FLETCHER, *upon the Printing of their excellent Dramatic Poems.*

DISDAIN not, gentle shades, the lowly praise
Which here I tender your immortal bays:
Call it not folly, but my zeal, that I
Strive to eternize you, that cannot die.
And though no language rightly can commend
What you have writ, save what yourselves have penn'd,
Yet let me wonder at those curious strains
(The rich conceptions of your twin-like brains)

* These verses, and those of Hills, which occur further on, were supposed by the former editors to have great weight in determining that all the plays mentioned in them were written by Fletcher alone; but though it is true that most of them were written after the death of Beaumont, we cannot attribute this to the information of Gardiner and Hills, but because most of the plays in the first folio (and Gardiner mentions almost all of them, and none which had previously appeared in quarto) were composed by Fletcher alone.

Which drew the gods' attention; who admired
To see our English stage by you inspired:
Whose chiming muses never fail'd to sing
A soul-affecting music, ravishing
Both ear and intellect; while you do each
Contend with other who shall highest reach
In rare invention; conflicts, that beget
New strange delight, to see two fancies met,
That could receive no foil; two wits in growth
So just, as had one soul informed both.
Thence (learned Fletcher) sung the muse alone,
As both had done before, thy Beaumont gone.
In whom, as thou, had he out-lived, so he
(Snatch'd first away) survived still in thee.
 What though distempers of the present age
Have banish'd your smooth numbers from the stage?
You shall be gainers by't; it shall confer
To th' making the vast world your theatre;
The press shall give to every man his part,
And we will all be actors; learn by heart
Those tragic scenes and comic strains you writ,
Unimitable both for art and wit;
And at each *exit*, as your fancies rise,
Our hands shall clap deserved plaudities.

JOHN WEBB.[5]

To the Desert of the Author in his most ingenious Piece.

THOU art above their censure, whose dark spirits
Respect but shades of things, and seeming merits,
That have no soul, nor reason to their will,
But rhyme as ragged as a gander's quill;
Where pride blows up the error, and transfers
Their zeal in tempests, that so widely errs.
Like heat and air compressed, their blind desires
Mix with their ends as raging winds with fires:
Whose ignorance and passions wear an eye
Squint to all parts of true humanity.

[5] *John Webb.*] I find no other traces of a John Webb who was likely to be author of this ingenious copy of verses, but that in 1629, four years after Fletcher's death, one John Webb, M. A. and fellow of Magdalen College, in Oxford, was made master of Croydon school.—*Seward.*

All is apocrypha suits not their vein;
For wit, oh fie! and learning too, profane!
But Fletcher hath done miracles by wit,
And one line of his may convert them yet,
Tempt them into the state of knowledge, and
[The] happiness to read and understand.
The way is strewed with laurel, and every muse
Brings incense to our Fletcher; whose scenes infuse
Such noble kindlings from her pregnant fire,
As charms her critic poets in desire;
And who doth read him that parts less endued
Than with some heat of wit or gratitude?
Some crowd to touch the relic of his bays,
Some to cry up their own wit in his praise,
And think they engage it by comparatives,
When from himself himself he best derives.
Let Shakspeare, Chapman, and applauded Ben,
Wear the eternal merit of their pen,
Here I am love-sick, and were I to choose
A Mistress corrival, 'tis Fletcher's muse.

GEORGE BUCK.[6]

On Mr BEAUMONT.

(Written thirty year since,[7] presently after his death.)

BEAUMONT lies here; and where now shall we have
A muse like his to sigh upon his grave!
Ah! none to weep this with a worthy tear,
But he that cannot, Beaumont that lies here.
Who now shall pay thy tomb with such a verse
As thou that lady's didst, fair Rutland's hearse?[8]

[6] A relation of Sir George Buck, master of the revels, who, in 1617, published the History of Richard III. by Sir George. See CHALMERS's *Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare Papers.* Lond. 1799, pp. 198—205.

[7] Thus the first folio, published in 1647.

[8] *Who now shall pay thy tomb with such a verse*
As thou that lady's didst, fair Rutland's hearse?] To *pay thy tomb* is a little obscure, but it seems to mean, to repay thee for writing so excellent an epitaph, by one as excellent as thyself.—*Seward.*

A monument that will then lasting be,
When all her marble is more dust than she.
In thee all's lost: A sudden dearth and want
Hath seized on Wit, good epitaphs are scant;
We dare not write thy elegy, whilst each fears
He ne'er shall match that copy of thy tears.
Scarce in an age[9] a poet, and yet he
Scarce lives the third part of his age to see;
But quickly taken off, and only known,
Is in a minute shut as soon as shewn.
Why should weak Nature tire herself in vain
In such a piece, to dash it straight again?
Why should she take such work beyond her skill,
Which, when she cannot perfect, she must kill?
Alas, what is't to temper slime or mire?
But Nature's puzzled, when she works in fire:[1]
Great brains, like brightest glass, crack straight, while those
Of stone or wood hold out, and fear not blows:
And we their ancient hoary heads can see,
Whose wit was never their mortality:
Beaumont dies young, so Sidney died before,[2]
There was not poetry he could live to more;
He could not grow up higher; I scarce know
If th' art itself unto that pitch could grow,
Were't not in thee, that hadst arrived the height
Of all that Wit could reach, or Nature might.
Oh, when I read those excellent things of thine,
Such strength, such sweetness, couch'd in every line,
Such life of fancy, such high choice of brain,
Nought of the vulgar wit[3] or borrow'd strain,
Such passion, such expressions meet my eye,
Such wit untainted with obscenity,

The poem alluded to is not, as Seward conjectures, the epitaph in Beaumont's Poems beginning—

"Here she lies, whose spotless fame."

See vol. xiv. p. 410, and p. cxxi of this vol. Earle refers to Beaumont's Elegy on the Countess of Rutland, vol. xiv. p. 443.

[9] *Scarce yet an age.*] So the copy in Beaumont's Poems.

[1] *Then Nature's puzzled when she works* entire.] Ibid.

[2] *So Sidney* did *before.*] It might perhaps have been—*so Sidney* died *before.—Seward.*

Beaumont's Poems exhibit *died.*—Ed. 1778

[3] *Mint.*] So in Beaumont's Poems.

And these so unaffectedly express'd,
All in a language purely-flowing drest;[4]
And all so born within thyself, thine own,
So new, so fresh, so nothing trod upon,
I grieve not now, that old Menander's vein
Is ruin'd, to survive in thee again;
Such in his time was he, of the same piece,
The smooth, even, natural wit, and love of Greece.
Those few sententious fragments shew more worth,
Than all the poets Athens e'er brought forth;
And I am sorry we have lost those hours
On them, whose quickness comes far short of ours,
And dwell not more on thee, whose every page
May be a pattern for their scene and stage.[5]
I will not yield thy works so mean a praise;
More pure, more chaste, more sainted than are plays
Nor with that dull supineness to be read,
To pass a fire, or laugh an hour in bed.
How do the muses suffer every where,
Taken in such mouths' censure, in such ear;,[6]
That, 'twixt a whiff, a line or two rehearse,
And with their rheum together spawl a verse!
This all a poem's leisure, after play,
Drink, or tobacco, it may keep the day.[7]

[4] *But all in a pure flowing language drest.*] So in Beaumont's Poem

[5] *Age.*] Ibid.

[6] *Taken in such mouths, censured in such ears.*] Ibid.

[7] *This all a poem's* leisure, *after play,*
Drink, or tobacco, it may keep the day.] What is *all a poem's leisure*? I can affix no idea to it but a Latinism, which, if defined, is extremely forced. *This is all a poem's*, i.e. a poem's part, power, or worth, it may serve to spend one's leisure hours after dice, drink, or tobacco. But unless the reader sees a more natural explication, I believe he will agree to its being discarded as a corruption, for a trifling change will give a clear sense—

This all a poem's *pleasure*, after play,
Drink or tobacco, it may keep the day.

i. e. all the pleasure a poem gives to these sons of dulness, is to spin out or pass away the time till sun-set, after cards, bottles, and tobacco are removed; thus to *pass a fire*, a little above, signifies to pass away the time till the fire is burnt out. But, to *keep a day*, is an expression not very applicable to this sense, (a sense which the context evidently requires) and though it may indeed be strained to something like it, yet, as we can retain three of the letters in *keep*, and, by a small transposition of the rest, give a much properer verb, it seems probable that *eke* was

Whilst even their very idleness, they think,
Is lost in these, that lose their time in drink.
Pity their dulness; we that better know,
Will a more serious hour on thee bestow.[8]
Why should not Beaumont in the morning please,
As well as Plautus, Aristophanes?
Who, if my pen may as my thoughts be free,
Were scurril[9] wits and buffoons both to thee;
Yet these our learned of severest brow
Will deign to look on, and to note them too,
That will defy our own; 'tis English stuff,
And th' author is not rotten long enough.
Alas, what phlegm are they, compared to thee,
In thy Philaster, and Maid's Tragedy?
Where's such an humour as thy Bessus, pray?[1]
Let them put all their Thrasoes in one play,
He shall out-bid them; their conceit was poor,[2]
All in a circle of a bawd or whore,
A coz'ning Davus,[3] take the fool away,
And not a good jest extant in a play.

the original, we generally now say to *eke out the day*; but it was used by our ancestors without the adverb, *to eke a thing*, i. e. to protract or lengthen it out. The reader will see a much greater corruption of the press than either of these, at the latter end of this poem.—*Seward.*

The meaning seems to be, "They have no *leisure* for poetry till they have done with gaming, drinking, and smoking; these having had their time, poetry may *command* the day."—Ed. 1778.

The copy in Beaumont's Poems reads—

'Tis all a puney's leisure after play,
Drink and tobacco, it may spend the day.

[8] *Pity their dulness, we that better know,*
Will a more serious hour on thee bestow.] So the folio. The text is from Beaumont's Poems.

[9] *Humble.*] So Beaumont's Poems.

[1] *Bessus? nay.*] Ibid.

[2] *Their conceit was poor,* &c.] Mr Earle's reflections on Terence are in part at least very unjust. There is perhaps too much sameness in his plots; but his old men and young, his servants, his parasites, &c., are each a distinct character from all the rest, and preserved throughout each play with infinite spirit and judgment. Beside which, the elegant diction and fine sentiments which every where abound in him, are patterns to the best comic writers; and which Beaumont and Fletcher strive to excel him in, by adding sublimity of poetry to justness of sentiment, well knowing that *jests* and *drollery* are only the lowest degree of comic excellence.—*Seward.*

[3] *A coz'ning dance.*] Corrected by Theobald, who says, "*Davus* is

Yet these are wits, because they're old, and now,[4]
Being Greek and Latin, they are learning too:
But those their own times were content to allow
A thriftier fame,[5] and thine is lowest now.
But thou shalt live, and, when thy name is grown
Six ages older, shalt be better known;
When thou'rt of Chaucer's standing in the tomb,
Thou shalt not share, but take up all his room.[6]

JOHN EARLE.[7]

the name of a subtle juggling servant in Terence's comedy called The Fair Andrian."—Ed. 1778.

There is a blank left for Davus in the copy in Beaumont's Poems.

4 *Yet these are wits, they're old, that's it, and now.*] Ibid.

5 A thirsty *fame.*] So the folio. The text from Beaumont's Poems.

6 This copy varies considerably from that printed with Beaumont's Poems.—Ed. 1778. The principal variations are noticed in the notes.

7 *Joh. Earle.*] Mr Earle was young when he wrote this, and there are indisputable marks of a bright poetic genius, which had probably been greatly inspired by an intimacy with Beaumont. He was in high repute as a preacher and a scholar in King Charles the First's reign, and seems to have been a true patriot; for it is probable that he opposed the court in the beginning of the troubles, as he was elected one of the Assembly of Divines; but he refused to act with them, and adhered to the king in his lowest state, and for it was deprived of the chancellorship of Salisbury, and all his other preferments. After the Restoration, he was made, first, Dean of Westminster, then Bishop of Worcester, and afterwards of Salisbury. Mr Wood gives a character of him, that extremely resembles that of the excellent Dr Hough, the late Bishop of Worcester; the sum of it is, that he joined the politeness of a courtier to the sanctity, goodness, and charity of an apostle.—*Seward.*

He was born at York in 1601, entered student at Merton College, Oxford, in 1620, took the degree of master of arts in 1621; in 1631 he was appointed proctor, and, about the same time, chaplain to the Earl of Pembroke. He was afterwards selected by the king for chaplain and tutor to Prince Charles, and chancellor of Salisbury cathedral, which appointments he was deprived of during the civil wars, as he fled with Charles II. to the Netherlands. At the Restoration he was appointed Dean of Westminster; in 1662 he obtained the bishoprick of Worcester, from whence he was translated to that of Salisbury in 1663. He died at Oxford 17th November, 1665. His most celebrated work is entitled, "Microcosmography, in Essays and Characters." His translation of the Εικων Βασιλικη into Latin was printed at the Hague in 1649

Upon Mr FLETCHER'S *incomparable Plays.*

THE poet lives; wonder not how or why
Fletcher revives, but that he e'er could die:
Safe mirth, full language, flow in every page,
At once he doth both heighten and assuage;
All innocence and wit, pleasant and clear,
Nor church nor laws were ever libelled here;
But fair deductions drawn from his great brain,
Enough to conquer all that's false or vain;
He scatters wit, and sense so freely flings,
That very citizens speak handsome things,
Teaching their wives such unaffected grace,
Their looks are now as handsome as their face.
Nor is this violent: he steals upon
The yielding soul until the frenzy's gone;
His very lancings do the patient please,
As when good music cures a mad disease.
Small poets rifle him, yet think it fair,
Because they rob a man that well can spare;
They feed upon him, owe him every bit,
They're all but sub-excisemen of his wit.

J. M.[8]

On the Works of BEAUMONT *and* FLETCHER, *now at length printed.*

GREAT pair of authors, whom one equal star
Begot so like in genius, that you are
In fame, as well as writings, both so knit,
That no man knows where to divide your wit,
Much less your praise: You, who had equal fire,
And did each other mutually inspire;
Whether one did contrive, the other write,
Or one framed the plot, the other did indite;

[8] This poem is probably by Jasper Maine, as well as the next; for the stationer, in his concluding verses, mentions "thirty-four witnesses," and as the number of poems besides his own is thirty-six, that of the encomiasts is thirty-four, there being two copies of verses by Cartwright and two by Maine.

Whether one found the matter, th' other dress,
Or th' one disposed what th' other did express:
Where'er your parts between yourselves lay, we,
In all things which you did, but one thread see;
So evenly drawn out, so gently spun,
That art with nature ne'er did smoother run.
Where shall I fix my praise then? or what part
Of all your numerous labours hath des
More to be famed than other? Shall I say
I've met a lover so drawn in your play,
So passionately written, so inflamed,
So jealously enraged, then gently tamed,
That I, in reading, have the person seen,
And your pen hath part stage and actor been?
Or shall I say that I can scarce forbear
To clap, when I a captain * do meet there; * Bessus
So lively in his own vain humour drest,
So braggingly, and like himself exprest,
That modern cowards, when they saw him play'd,
Saw, blush'd, departed, guilty and betray'd?
You wrote all parts right; whatsoe'er the stage
Had from you, was seen there as in the age,
And had their equal life: Vices which were
Manners abroad, did grow corrected there:
They who possest a box, and half-crown⁹ spent
To learn obsceneness, return'd innocent,
And thank'd you for this coz'nage, whose chaste scene
Taught loves so noble, so reform'd, so clean,
That they, who brought foul fires, and thither came
To bargain, went thence with a holy flame.
Be't to your praise too, that your stock and vein
Held both to tragic and to comic strain;[1]
Where'er you listed to be high and grave,
No buskin shew'd more solemn; no quill gave
Such feeling objects to draw tears from eyes,
Spectators sate parts in your tragedies.
And where you listed to be low and free,
Mirth turn'd the whole house into comedy,
So piercing (where you pleased) hitting a fault,
That humours from your pen issued all salt.

⁹ *Half-crown.*] This was the price of the boxes at some of the private houses, such as the Phœnix in Drury-Lane.

[1] ——— *your* stock *and* vein
Held both to tragic and to comic strain.] *i. e.* Your *stock* of understanding and knowledge, and your *vein* of wit and humour, are equally excellent in tragedy and comedy.—*Seward.*

Nor were you thus in works and poems knit,
As to be but two halfs, and make one wit;
But as some things, we see, have double cause,
And yet the effect itself from both whole draws;
So, though you were thus twisted and combined,
As [in] two bodies to have but one fair mind,[2]
Yet, if we praise you rightly, we must say,
Both join'd, and both did wholly make the play.
For that you could write singly, we may guess
By the divided pieces which the press
Hath severally sent forth,[3] nor were join'd so,
Like some our modern authors made to go
One merely by the help of th' other,[4] who
To purchase fame do come forth one of two,
Nor wrote you so, that one's part was to lick
The other into shape, nor did one stick
The other's cold inventions with such wit,
As served, like spice, to make them quick and fit,
Nor, out of mutual want, or emptiness,
Did you conspire to go still twins to th' press;

As two bodies to have but one fair mind.] Amended by Seward.

By the divided pieces which the press
Hath severally sent forth,] I have before shewed that there were two comedies wrote by Beaumont singly, and given some reasons why the Nice Valour ought to be deemed one of them. Whether Mr Mayne in this place referred to these two comedies, knowing which they were, or whether he only meant the Mask at Gray's Inn, which was the only piece which we know to have been published in Beaumont's name before these Commendatory Poems were published, or whether he spoke in general terms, without a strict adherence to facts, must be left uncertain. —*Seward.*

The editor's reasons for doubting Seward's hypothesis respecting The Nice Valour, will be found in the introduction to that play, vol. IV. p. 20[illegible]. Mayne may allude to Beaumont's Salmacis and Hermaphroditus, which came out in his life-time, as well as to The Masque, and to Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess, Woman-Hater, and Thierry and Theodoret.

4 ———————— *nor were* gone *so,*
Like some our modern authors made to go
On *merely by the help of th' other.*] The word *go*, which ends the next line, seems to have ran in the printer's head, and made him put *gone* here instead of some other word. Mr Theobald had prevented me in the emendation. We read *join'd so*, and as I have his concurrence, I have the less doubt in preferring it to Mr Sympson's conjecture—*Nor were one so*, though this latter is very good sense, and nearer the trace of the letters, but it would make *one* be repeated too often, for it is already in the third and fourth lines after, and 'tis very evident to me that it should have been in the second, for *On merely*, I read *One merely*.—*Seward.*

But what, thus join'd, you wrote, might have come forth
As good from each, and stored with the same worth
That thus united them: You did join sense;
In you 'twas league, in others impotence;
And the press, which both thus amongst us sends,
Sends us one poet in a pair of friends.

JASPER MAINE.

Upon the Report of the Printing of the Dramatical Poems of Master JOHN FLETCHER, *never collected before, and now set forth in one Volume.*

THOUGH when all Fletcher writ, and the entire
Man was indulged unto that sacred fire,
His thoughts, and his thoughts' dress, appear'd both such,
That 'twas his happy fault to do too much:
Who therefore wisely did submit each birth
To knowing Beaumont, ere it did come forth,
Working again until he said, 'twas fit
And made him the sobriety of his wit.
Though thus he call'd his judge into his fame,
And for that aid allow'd him half the name,
'Tis known, that sometimes he did stand alone,
That both the spunge and pencil were his own;
That himself judged himself, could singly do,
And was at last Beaumont and Fletcher too:
Else we had lost his Shepherdess,[6] a piece
Even and smooth, spun from a finer fleece;

[5] *Jasper Maine.*] This gentleman was author of The City Match, a comedy, and The Amorous War, a tragi-comedy. He was an eminent preacher in the civil war, but warmly adhering to the king, was deprived of all his preferments in Cromwell's time, and taken for charity into the Earl of Devonshire's family, where his learning, piety, and wit, rendered him a proper advocate for religion against the famous Mr Hobbs, then a tutor in that family. After the Restoration he was made canon of Christ-Church, and archdeacon of Chichester.—*Seward.*

He was born at Hatherleigh, in Devonshire, and died 6th December, 1672. Both his dramatic performances rank above mediocrity.

[6] *Else we had lost his Shepherdess.*] Mr Cartwright was a very bright, but a very young man, and seems to taste our authors' plays extremely well, but to have known nothing of their dates and history. He supposes the Shepherdess wrote after Beaumont's death, so that his testimony ought to have no sort of weight in excluding Beaumont from all share in the composition of the plays. He had taken up the supposition of Beau-

Where softness reigns, where passions passions greet,
Gentle and high, as floods of balsam meet.
Where, dress'd in white expressions, sit bright loves,
Drawn, like their fairest queen, by milky doves;
A piece which Jonson in a rapture bid
Come up a glorified work: and so it did.
Else had his muse set with his friend, the stage
Had miss'd those poems, which yet take the age;
The world had lost those rich exemplars, where
Art, language, wit, sit ruling in one sphere;
Where the fresh matters soar above old themes,
As prophets' raptures do above our dreams;
Where, in a worthy scorn, he dares refuse
All other gods, and makes the thing his muse:
Where he calls passions up, and lays them so,
As spirits, awed by him to come and go;
Where the free author did whate'er he would,
And nothing will'd but what a poet should.
No vast uncivil bulk swells any scene,
The strength's ingenious, and the vigour clean;
None can prevent the fancy, and see through
At the first opening; all stand wond'ring how
The thing will be, until it is; which thence,
With fresh delight still cheats, still takes the sense;
The whole design, the shadows, the lights such,
That none can say he shews or hides too much:
Business grows up, ripen'd by just encrease,
And by as just degrees again doth cease;
The heats and minutes of affairs are watch'd,
And the nice points of time are met, and snatch'd;
Nought later than it should, nought comes before,
Chemists and calculators do err more:
Sex, age, degree, affections, country, place,
The inward substance, and the outward face,
All kept precisely, all exactly fit;
What he would write, he was before he writ.
'Twixt Jonson's grave, and Shakspeare's lighter sound,
His muse so steer'd, that something still was found,
Nor this, nor that, nor both, but so his own,
That 'twas his mark, and he was by it known;

mont's being only a corrector, perhaps merely because Jonson had celebrated his judgment, not considering that he celebrated his fancy too.—*Seward.*

Cartwright could not suppose the Shepherdess was wrote after Beaumont's death. His words only mean, "If Fletcher could not have wrote without Beaumont, we should not have had The Faithful Shepherdess," in which the latter had no concern.—Ed. 1778.

Hence did he take true judgments, hence did strike
All palates some way, though not all alike:
The god of numbers might his numbers crown,
And, listning to them, wish they were his own.
Thus, welcome forth, what ease, or wine, or wit
Durst yet produce; that is, what Fletcher writ!

WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT.

Another.

FLETCHER, though some call it thy fault that wit
So overflow'd thy scenes, that e'er 'twas fit
To come upon the stage, Beaumont was fain
To bid thee be more dull; that's, write again,
And bate some of thy fire; which from thee came
In a clear, bright, full, but too large a flame;
And, after all, (finding thy genius such)
That blunted, and allay'd, 'twas yet too much,
Added his sober spunge: and did contract
Thy plenty to less wit, to make't exact:
Yet we, through his corrections, could see
Much treasure in thy superfluity;
Which was so filed away, as, when we do
Cut jewels, that that's lost is jewel too;
Or as men use to wash gold, which we know
By losing makes the stream thence wealthy grow.
They who do on thy works severely sit,
And call thy store the over-births of wit,
Say thy miscarriages were rare, and when
Thou wert superfluous, that thy fruitful pen
Had no fault but abundance, which did lay
Out in one scene what might well serve a play,
And hence do grant that what they call excess,
Was to be reckon'd as thy happiness,
From whom wit issued in a full spring-tide,
Much did enrich the stage, much flow'd beside.
For that thou couldst thine own free fancy bind
In stricter numbers, and run so confined
As to observe the rules of art, which sway
In the contrivance of a true-born play,
Those works proclaim which thou didst write retired
From Beaumont, by none but thyself inspired.

Where, we see, 'twas not chance that made them hit,
Nor were thy plays the lotteries of wit;
But, like to Durer's pencil,[7] which first knew
The laws of faces, and then faces drew,
Thou knew'st the air, the colour, and the place,
The symmetry, which gives a poem grace.
Parts are so fitted unto parts, as do
Shew thou hadst wit, and mathematics too:
Knew'st where by line to spare, where to dispense,
And didst beget just comedies from thence:
Things unto which thou didst such life bequeath,
That they, (their own Blackfriars[8]) unacted, breathe.
Jonson hath writ things lasting and divine,
Yet his love-scenes, Fletcher, compared to thine,
Are cold and frosty, and express love so,
As heat with ice, or warm fires mix'd with snow;
Thou, as if struck with the same generous darts,
Which burn, and reign, in noble lovers' hearts,
Hast clothed affections in such native tires,
And so described them in their own true fires,
Such moving sighs, such undissembled tears,
Such charms of language, such hopes mix'd with fears,
Such grants after denials, such pursuits
After despair, such amorous recruits,
That some, who sat spectators, have confest
Themselves transform'd to what they saw exprest:
And felt such shafts steal through their captived sense,
As made them rise parts, and go lovers thence.
Nor was thy style wholly composed of groves,
Or the soft strains of shepherds and their loves;
When thou wouldst comic be, each smiling birth,
In that kind, came into the world all mirth,
All point, all edge, all sharpness; we did sit
Sometimes five acts out in pure sprightful wit,
Which flow'd in such true salt, that we did doubt
In which scene we laugh'd most two shillings[9] out.

[7] *Like to Durer's pencil.*] Albert Durer was a most excellent German painter, born in 1471, much admired even by the great Raphael himself, and in so high esteem with the Emperor Maximilian the First, that he presented him with a coat of arms as the badge of nobility.—*Theobald.*

[8] *That they, their own Blackfriars.*] *i. e.* Their own theatre; meaning, that Fletcher's plays were so sprightly, that, though then unacted, (by reason of the troublesome times and civil war which raged against King Charles the First) they wanted no advantage of a stage to set them off. One of the seven playhouses, subsisting in our authors' time, was in Blackfriars.—*Theobald.*

[9] *Two shillings.*] The price of the boxes at Blackfriars. See MALONE'S *Hist. Acc. of the E. Stage*, apud REED'S *Shakspeare*, III. 77.

Shakspeare to thee was dull,[1] whose best jest lies
I' th' ladies' questions, and the fools' replies,
Old-fashion'd wit, which walk'd from town to town
In trunk-hose,[2] which our fathers call'd the clown;
Whose wit our nice times would obsceneness call,
And which made bawdry pass for comical.
Nature was all his art; thy vein was free
As his, but without his scurrility;
From whom mirth came unforced, no jest perplex'd,
But, without labour, clean, chaste, and unvex'd.
Thou wert not like some, our small poets, who
Could not be poets, were not we poets too;
Whose wit is pilf'ring, and whose vein and wealth
In poetry lies merely in their stealth;
Nor didst thou feel their drought, their pangs, their qualms,
Their rack in writing, who do write for alms;
Whose wretched genius, and dependent fires,
But to their benefactors' dole aspires.
Nor hadst thou the sly trick thyself to praise
Under thy friends' names; or, to purchase bays,
Didst write stale commendations to thy book,
Which we for Beaumont's or Ben Jonson's took:

[1] *Shakspeare to thee was dull.*] This false censure arose from the usual fault of panegyrists, of depreciating others to extol their favourite. Had he only said, as in the former copy, that Fletcher was in a due medium between Jonson's correctness and Shakspeare's fancy, he had done Fletcher, as well as himself, more real honour. But it must be observed, that Beaumont and Fletcher were so much the general taste of the age, both in Charles the First and Second's reign, that Mr Cartwright only follows the common judgment. The reason seems to be this: Jonson survived both Shakspeare and our authors many years, and as he warmly opposed the strange irregularities of the English theatre, at the head of which irregularities was so great a genius as Shakspeare, he formed a strong party against him. But nature frequently spoke in Shakspeare so directly to the heart, and his excellencies, as well as faults, were so glaring, that the prejudices against the latter could not wholly blind men to the former. As our authors resembled him in these excellencies more than Jonson, and yet often followed Jonson's correctness and manner, the partisans both of Shakspeare and Jonson were willing to compromise it, and allow them the first honours, as partaking of both their excellencies. After the Restoration, French rules of the drama were introduced, and our authors being nearer them than Shakspeare, they still held their superiority.—*Seward.*

[2] *In turn'd hose.*] We must read *trunk-hose*, i. e. a kind of large slops, or trowsers, worn by the clowns. So in Sir John Berkenhead's copy of verses:

——— "You two thought fit
To wear just robes, and leave off *trunk-hose* wit." *Theobald.*

That debt thou left'st to us, which none but he
Can truly pay, Fletcher, who writes like thee.

WILLIAM CARTWRIGHT.[3]

On Mr FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

(Then newly dead.)

He that hath such acuteness and such wit,[4]
As would ask ten good heads[5] to husband it;
He that can write[6] so well, that no man dare
Refuse it for the best, let him beware:
Beaumont is dead, by whose sole death appears,[7]
Wit's a disease consumes men[8] in few years.

RICH. CORBET, D.D.[9]

[3] *William Cartwright.*] Mr Cartwright was esteemed one of the best poets, orators, and philosophers of his age; he was first a king's scholar at Westminster, then student of Christ-Church, Oxon. Wood calls him the most seraphical preacher of his age, another Tully and another Virgil. He died about the age of thirty, in 1643, in the year of his proctorship, when King Charles the First was at Oxford, by whom his death was most affectionately mourned. He wrote The Lady Errant, The Royal Slave, and Love's Convert, tragi-comedies; and a volume of his poems was printed after his death. See Wood's Athenæ.—*Seward.*

Cartwright's best play, The Ordinary, Mr Seward has not mentioned. —Ed. 1778.

[4] *He that had youth and friends, and so much wit.*] So the copy in Beaumont's Poems, from which the following variations are also taken. The copy in Corbet's Poems coincides with the text.

[5] As would ask *five good wits.* [6] —— *hath writ rote.*

[7] —— *by which our art appears.* [8] *One.*

[9] Richard Corbet was born in 1582, and educated at Westminster-Hall, and Christ-Church, Oxford. He became chaplain to King James, and, in 1627, Dean of Christ-Church. In 1629 he was made Bishop of Oxford, and, in 1632, translated to the see of Norwich. He died July 28th, 1635. His poems were published in 1647: they display considerable humour, but make no pretensions to imagination or correctness of judgment.

To Mr FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

(Then living.)

How I do love thee, Beaumont, and thy muse,
That unto me dost such religion use!
How I do fear myself, that am not worth
The least indulgent thought thy pen drops forth!
At once thou mak'st me happy, and unmak'st,
And giving largely to me, more thou tak'st.
What fate is mine, that so itself bereaves?
What art is thine, that so thy friend deceives?
When even there, where most thou praisest me
For writing better, I must envy thee.

BEN JONSON.

Upon Mr FLETCHER'S *incomparable Plays.*

APOLLO sings, his harp resounds: give room,
For now behold the golden pomp is come,
Thy pomp of plays which thousands come to see,
With admiration both of them and thee.
Oh, volume! worthy, leaf by leaf, and cover,
To be with juice of cedar wash'd all over;
Here's words with lines, and lines with scenes consent,
To raise an act to full astonishment;
Here melting numbers, words of power to move
Young men to swoon, and maids to die for love.
Love lies a-bleeding here; *Evadne* there
Swells with brave rage, yet comely every where:
Here's a *Mad Lover*, there that high design
Of *King and no King*, and the rare plot thine,

* This short copy (which seems wrote with a sincerity not common in complimentary verses) treats Beaumont not only as an excellent critic, but as an excellent poet; and is an answer to Beaumont's Letter to Jonson (vol xiv. p. 432.)—*Seward.*

It is by no means certain that these verses have any reference to Beaumont's poem mentioned by Seward. They may as probably allude to our poet's complimentary verses on some of Jonson's dramatic perform-

So that whenc'er we circumvolve our eyes,
Such rich, such fresh, such sweet varieties
Ravish our spirits, that entranced we see
None writes love's passions in the world like thee.
ROB. HERRICK.[2]

On the happy Collection of Mr FLETCHER'S *Works, never before printed.*

FLETCHER, arise! usurpers share thy bays,
They canton thy vast wit to build small plays:
He comes! his volume breaks through clouds and dust;
Down, little wits! ye must refund, ye must.
Nor comes he private; here's great Beaumont too:
How could one single world encompass two?
For these coheirs had equal power to teach
All that all wits both can and cannot reach.
Shakspeare was early up, and went so drest
As for those dawning hours he knew was best;
But, when the sun shone forth, you two thought fit
To wear just robes, and leave off trunk-hose wit.
Now, now, 'twas perfect; none must look for new,
Manners and scenes may alter, but not you;
For yours are not mere humours, gilded strains;
The fashion lost, your massy sense remains.
Some think your wits of two complexions framed,
That one the sock, th' other the buskin, claim'd;
That, should the stage embattle all its force,
Fletcher would lead the foot, Beaumont the horse.
But you were both for both; not semi-wits,
Each piece is wholly two, yet never splits:
Ye are not two faculties, and one soul still,
He th' understanding, thou the quick free will;
Not as two voices in one song embrace,
Fletcher's keen treble, and deep Beaumont's base,[3]

[2] Robert Herrick was one of the most elegant of the minor poets of Charles I.'s time. A judicious selection from his Hesperides has been lately published by Dr Nott.

[3] *But, as two voices in one song embrace,*
(Fletcher's keen treble, *and deep Beaumont's* base)
Two full, congenial souls.] Here Berkenhead is speaking of the

Two, full, congenial souls; still both prevail'd;
His muse and thine were quarter'd, not impaled:[4]
Both brought your ingots, both toil'd at the mint,
Beat, melted, sifted, till no dross stuck in't;
Then in each other's scales weigh'd every grain,
Then smooth'd and burnish'd, then weigh'd all again;
Stampt both your names upon't at one bold hit,
Then, then 'twas coin, as well as bullion-wit.
  Thus twins: But as when Fate one eye deprives,
That other strives to double, which survives,
So Beaumont died; yet left in legacy
His rules and standard wit (Fletcher) to thee.
Still the same planet, though not fill'd so soon,
A two-horn'd crescent then, now one full-moon.
Joint love before, now honour, doth provoke;
So th' old twin giants forcing a huge oak,
One slipp'd his footing, th' other sees him fall,
Grasp'd the whole tree, and single held up all.
Imperial Fletcher! here begins thy reign;
Scenes flow like sun-beams from thy glorious brain;

doubtful opinions relating to the share which Beaumont and Fletcher had in these plays: He tells you, that the general opinion was, that Beaumont was a *grave tragic writer*, Fletcher most excellent in comedy. This he contradicts; but how? why, they did not differ as a general of horse does from a general of foot, nor as the *sock* does from the *buskin*, nor as the *will* from the *understanding*, but were *two full congenial souls*, and differed only as the *base* and *treble* do in the same song. Why, if this is the true reading, he confirms in these lines what he had contradicted in all the foregoing similies, for *base* and *treble* have much the same difference between them as horse and foot in an army, or the wit and understanding in the soul. To make the writer consistent with himself, the true reading seems to be *not* instead of *but*:

Not as two voices in one song embrace,
Fletcher's keen treble, *and deep Beaumont's* base;
Two, full, congenial souls. Seward.

[4] *His muse and thine were* quarter'd, *not* impaled;] I know I am going out of my depth, in attempting a criticism on terms in heraldry; but my books tell me, that *impaling* is when the arms of the man and wife are placed on the same escutcheon, the one on the right and the other on the left; which is a proper emblem of the matrimonial union; and might seemingly be as well applied to the marriage of Beaumont and Fletcher's wit, as the word *quartering* can, which the same Berkenhead speaks of at the latter end of this poem:

What strange production is at last display'd,
Got by two fathers without female aid!

But I shall attempt no change in a *science* where I am ignorance itself.—*Seward.*

Thy swift-dispatching soul no more doth stay,
Than he that built two cities in one day;
Ever brim-full, and sometimes running o'er,
To feed poor languid wits that wait at door;
Who creep and creep, yet ne'er above-ground stood;
(For creatures have most feet, which have least blood)
But thou art still that bird of paradise,
Which hath no feet, and ever nobly flies;
Rich, lusty sense, such as the poet ought;
For poems, if not excellent, are nought;
Low wit in scenes in state a peasant goes;
If mean and flat, let it foot yeoman-prose,
That such may spell, as are not readers grown;
To whom he, that writes wit, shews he hath none.
Brave Shakspeare flow'd, yet had his ebbings too,
Often above himself, sometimes below;
Thou always best; if aught seemed to decline,
'Twas the unjudging route's mistake, not thine:
Thus thy fair Shepherdess, which the bold heap
(False to themselves and thee) did prize so cheap,
Was found (when understood) fit to be crown'd;
At worst 'twas worth two hundred thousand pound.
Some blast thy works, lest we should track their walk,
Where they steal all those few good things they talk;
Wit-burglary must chide those it feeds on,
For plunder'd folks ought to be rail'd upon;
But (as stolen goods go off at half their worth)
Thy strong sense palls, when they purloin it forth.
When didst thou borrow? where's the man e'er read
Aught begg'd by thee from those alive or dead?
Or from dry goddesses? as some, who, when
They stuff their page with gods, write worse than men;
Thou wast thine own muse, and hadst such vast odds,
Thou out-writ'st him whose verse made all those gods:
Surpassing those our dwarfish age up rears,
As much as Greeks, or Latins, thee in years:
Thy ocean fancy knew nor banks nor dams;
We ebb down dry to pebble-anagrams;
Dead and insipid, all despairing sit;
Lost to behold this great relapse of wit:
What strength remains, is like that (wild and fierce)
Till Jonson made good poets and right verse.
Such boist'rous trifles thy muse would not brook,
Save when she'd shew how scurvily they look;
No savage metaphors (things rudely great)
Thou dost display, nor butcher a conceit;

Thy nerves have beauty which invades and charms;
Looks like a princess harness'd in bright arms.
Nor art thou loud and cloudy; those, that do
Thunder so much, do't without lightning too;
Tearing themselves, and almost split their brain
To render harsh what thou speak'st free and clean;
Such gloomy sense may pass for high and proud,
But true-born wit still flies above the cloud;
Thou knew'st 'twas impotence, what they call height;
Who blusters strong i' th' dark, but creeps i' th' light.
And as thy thoughts were clear, so, innocent;
Thy fancy gave no unswept language vent;
Slander'st not laws, prophan'st no holy page
(As if thy father's crosier awed the stage;)
High crimes were still arraign'd; tho' they made shift
To prosper out four acts, were plagued i' th' fift:
All's safe and wise; no stiff affected scene,
Nor swoln, nor flat, a true full natural vein;
Thy sense (like well-drest ladies) cloath'd as skinn'd,
Not all unlaced, nor city-starch'd and pinn'd;
Thou hadst no sloth, no rage, no sullen fit,
But strength and mirth; Fletcher's a sanguine wit.
Thus, two great consul-poets all things sway'd,
Till all was English born or English made:
Mitre and coif here into one piece spun,
Beaumont a judge's, this a prelate's son
What strange production is at last display'd,
Got by two fathers, without female aid!
Behold, two masculines espoused each other;
Wit and the world were born without a mother.

J. Berkenhead.[5]

To the Memory of Master Fletcher.

There's nothing gained by being witty: Fame
Gathers but wind to blather up a name.
Orpheus must leave his lyre, or if it be
In Heaven, 'tis there a sign, no harmony;

[5] *J. Berkenhead.*] *Berkenhead* was first amanuensis to Bishop Laud, and fellow of All-Souls. He was author of the *Mercurius Aulicus*, a very loyal paper in the time of the rebellion. He was persecuted much in Cromwell's days, and lived by his wits; afterwards he had good places under King Charles the Second, was member of parliament, and knighted.—*Seward.*

And stones that follow'd him may now become
Now stones[6] again, and serve him for his tomb.
The Theban Linus, that was ably skill'd
In muse and music, was by Phœbus kill'd,
Though Phœbus did beget him: sure his art
Had merited his balsam, not his dart.
But here Apollo's jealousy is seen,
The god of physic's troubled with the spleen;
Like timorous kings he puts a period
To high-grown parts lest he should be no god.
Hence those great master-wits of Greece, that gave
Life to the world, could not avoid a grave;
Hence the inspired prophets of old Rome,
Too great for earth, fled to Elysium.
But the same ostracism benighted one,
To whom all these were but illusion;
It took our Fletcher hence, Fletcher, whose wit
Was not an accident to th' soul, but *it*,
Only diffused. (Thus we the same sun call,
Moving i' th' sphere, and shining on a wall.)
Wit so high placed at first, it could not climb,
Wit, that ne'er grew, but only shewed by time.
No fire-work of sack, no seldom shown
Poetic rage, but still in motion:
And with far more than spheric excellence
It moved, for 'twas its own intelligence;
And yet so obvious to sense, so plain,
You'd scarcely think't allied unto the brain;
So sweet, it gained more ground upon the stage
Than Jonson with his self-admiring rage
E'er lost: and then so naturally it fell,
That fools would think that they could do as well.
This is our loss: yet, 'spite of Phœbus, we
Will keep our Fletcher, for his wit is he.

EDW. POWELL.

[6] Now *stones*.] I suppose we should read—*new* stones.

Upon the ever-to-be-admired Mr JOHN FLETCHER *and his Plays.*

WHAT's all this preparation for? or why
Such sudden triumphs? Fletcher, the people cry!
Just so, when kings approach, our conduits run
Claret, as here the spouts flow Helicon:
See, every sprightful muse, dress'd trim and gay,
Strews herbs and scatters roses in his way.
Thus th' outward yard set round with bays we've seen,
Which from the garden hath transplanted been;
Thus, at the prætor's feast, with needless costs,
Some must be employ'd in painting of the posts;
And some, as dishes made for sight, not taste,
Stand here as things for show to Fletcher's feast.
Oh, what an honour, what a grace 't had been,
To have had his cook in *Rollo* serve them in!
Fletcher, the king of poets! such was he,
That earn'd all tribute, claim'd all sovereignty;
And may he that denies it, learn to blush
At's *Loyal Subject*, starve at's *Beggar's Bush*;
And, if not drawn by example, shame, nor grace,
Turn o'er to's *Coxcomb*, and the *Wild-Goose Chase.*
Monarch of wit! great magazine of wealth!
From whose rich bank, by a Promethean stealth,
Our lesser flames do blaze! His the true fire,
When they, like glow-worms, being touch'd, expire.
'Twas first believed, because he always was
The *ipse dixit*, and Pythagoras
To our disciple-wits, his soul might run
(By the same dreamt-of transmigration)
Into their rude and indigested brain,
And so inform their chaos-lump again;
For many specious brats of this last age
Spoke Fletcher perfectly in every page.
This roused his rage, to be abused thus,
Made's *Lover Mad, Lieutenant Humorous.*
Thus ends-of-gold-and-silver-men are made
(As th' use to say) goldsmiths of his own trade;
Thus rag-men from the dung-hill often hop,
And publish forth by chance a broker's shop.
But by his own light, now, we have descried
The dross, from that hath been so purely tried.
Proteus of wit! who reads him doth not see
The manners of each sex, of each degree?

His full-stored fancy doth all humours fill,
From th' *Queen of Corinth* to the *Maid o' th' Mill;*
His *Curate, Lawyer, Captain, Prophetess,*
Shew he was all and every one of these;
He taught (so subtly were their fancies seized)
To *Rule a Wife,* and yet the *Women Pleased.*
Parnassus is thine own; claim it as merit,
Law makes the *Elder Brother* to inherit.

G. HILLS.

In Honour of Mr JOHN FLETCHER.

So Fletcher now presents to fame
His alone self and unpropt name;
As rivers rivers entertain,
But still fall single into th' main;
So doth the moon in consort shine,
Yet flows alone into its mine,
And though her light be jointly thrown,
When she makes silver 'tis her own.
Perhaps his quill flew stronger, when
'Twas weaved with his Beaumont's pen,
And might with deeper wonder hit,
It could not show more his, more wit;
So Hercules came by sex and love,
When Pallas sprang from single Jove!
He took his Beaumont for embrace,
Not to grow by him, and increase,
Nor for support did with him twine,
He was his friend's friend, not his vine.
His wit with wit he did not twist
To be assisted, but to assist.
And who could succour him, whose quill
Did both run sense, and sense distil,
Had time and art in't, and the while
Slid even as theirs who're only style?
Whether his chance did cast it so,
Or that it did like rivers flow,
Because it must, or whether 'twere
A smoothness from his file and ear,
Not the most strict enquiring nail
Could e'er find where his piece did fail

Of entire oneness; so the frame
Was composition, yet the same.
How does he breed his *Brother*,[7] and
Make wealth and estate understand,
Suits land to wit, makes luck match merit,
And makes an *Eldest* fitly inherit!
How was he Ben, when Ben did write
To th' stage, not to his judge indite!
How did he do what Jonson did,
And earn what Jonson would have se'd?[8]

JOSIAH HOWE of Trin. Col. Oxon.[9]

On Master JOHN FLETCHER, *his Dramatical Works now at last printed.*

I COULD praise Heywood now; or tell how long
Falstaff from cracking nuts hath kept the throng:
But for a Fletcher I must take an age,
And scarce invent the title for one page.
Gods must create new spheres, that should express
The several accents, Fletcher, of thy dress:
The pen of fates should only write thy praise,
And all Elysium for thee turn to bays.
Thou felt'st no pangs of poetry, such as they
Who the heavens quarter still before a play,
And search the Ephemerides[1] to find
When the aspect for poets will be kind.

[7] *Brother.*] Alluding to the Elder Brother.

[8] *And earn what Jonson would have se'd?*] Mr Howe is very obscure, and his verses so worthless, that they hardly deserve any comment. What this last expression means, unless it is a corruption of *sowed*, I am unable to explain.

[9] Josiah Howe was fellow of Trinity college. At Cromwell's reformation of the university he was thrust out of his fellowship, to which he was restored at the Restoration. In 1690 he was still living.

[1] *Ephemerides.*] i. e. almanacs. This confirms the propriety of a passage in the Scornful Lady (vol. II. p. 157,) where the modern editors read *Ephemeris*. So again in A. Brome's Cunning Lovers:

"They say, my lord, there is a negromancer,
One of rare art and cunning, that can truly
Tell of things lost, one that hath *Ephemerides*

Thy poems (sacred spring!) did from thee flow,
With as much pleasure, as we read them now.
Nor need we only take them up by fits,
When love or physic hath diseased our wits;
Or construe English to untie a knot,
Hid in a line, far subtler than the plot.
With thee the page may close his lady's eyes,
And yet with thee the serious student rise:
The eye at several angles darting rays,
Makes, and then sees, new colours; so thy plays
To every understanding still appear,
As if thou only meant'st to take that ear;
The phrase so terse and free, of a just poise,
Where every word has weight, and yet no noise;
The matter too so nobly fit, no less
Than such as only could deserve thy dress:
Witness thy comedies, pieces of such worth,
All ages shall still like, but ne'er bring forth.
Others in season last scarce so long time,
As cost the poet but to make the rhyme:
Where, if a lord a new way does but spit,
Or change his shrug, this antiquates the wit.
That thou didst live before, nothing would tell
Posterity, could they but write so well.
Thy catholic fancy will acceptance find,
Not whilst an humour's living, but mankind.
Thou, like thy writings, innocent and clean,
Ne'er practised a new vice, to make one scene;
None of thy ink had gall, and ladies can
Securely hear thee sport without a fan.
  But when thy tragic muse would please to rise
In majesty, and call tribute from our eyes,
Like scenes, we shifted passions, and that so,
Who only came to see, turned actors too.
How didst thou sway the theatre! make us feel
The players' wounds were true, and their swords, steel!
Nay, stranger yet, how often did I know
When the spectators ran to save the blow![2]

At's fingers ends; no frenzy, fever, sickness,
But he hath cordials for; so his large bills
Pasted on every post speak in his praise."

[2] *How often did I know
When the spectators ran to save the blow!*] This alludes to those spectators who were accommodated with chairs on the stage. The encomiast may refer to some contemporary anecdote, like that of Mademoi-

Frozen with grief we could not stir away
Until the epilogue told us 'twas a play.
What shall I do? all commendations end
In saying only, thou wert Beaumont's friend!
Give me thy spirit quickly, for I swell,
And like a raving prophetess cannot tell
How to receive thy genius in my breast:
Oh! I must sleep, and then I'll sing the rest.
T. PALMER, of Ch. Ch. Oxon.[3]

Upon the unparalleled Plays written by those renowned Twins of Poetry, BEAUMONT *and* FLETCHER.

WHAT's here? another library of praise,[4]
Met in a troop to advance contemned plays,
And bring exploded wit again in fashion?
I can't but wonder at this reformation.
My skipping soul surfeits with so much good,
To see my hopes into fruition bud.
A happy chemistry! blest viper! Joy!
That through thy mother's bowels gnaw'st thy way!
Wits flock in shoals, and club to re-erect,
In spite of ignorance, the architect
Of occidental poesy; and turn
Gods, to recal Wit's ashes from their urn.

selle Dumesnil, who, performing the character of Cleopatra in a high strain of passion, on uttering a threat against the gods, was struck violently on the neck by an old officer, who accompanied the blow with execrations. At the conclusion of the tragedy she thanked him most warmly, declaring that she never had received equally valuable applause.

[3] Wood mentions five authors of this name, so that it is uncertain to which of them these verses should be attributed.

[4] *Another library of praise.*] This alludes to the numerous commendatory copies of verses on *Tom Coryat's Crudities*, which swelled into an entire volume. This is touched at in the copy of verses by Richard Brome:

"*For the witty copies took,*
Of his encomiums *made themselves a book.*" Theobald.

Like huge Colosses, they've together knit[5]
Their shoulders to support a world of wit.
The tale of Atlas (though of truth it miss)
We plainly read mythologized in this!
Orpheus and Amphion, whose undying stories
Made Athens famous, are but allegories.
'Tis Poetry has power to civilize
Men, worse than stones, more blockish than the trees.
I cannot choose but think (now things so fall)
That Wit is past its climacterical;
And though the Muses have been dead and gone,
I know they'll find a resurrection.
'Tis vain to praise; they're to themselves a glory,
And silence is our sweetest oratory.
For he, that names but Fletcher, must needs be
Found guilty of a loud hyperbole.
His fancy so transcendently aspires,
He shews himself a wit, who but admires.
Here are no volumes stuff'd with chevrel sense,[6]
The very anagrams of eloquence;
Nor long long winded sentences that be,
Being rightly spell'd, but wit's stenography;
Nor words as void of reason as of rhyme,
Only cæsura'd to spin out the time.
But here's a magazine of purest sense,
Cloath'd in the newest garb of eloquence:
Scenes that are quick and sprightly, in whose veins
Bubbles the quintessence of sweet high strains.
Lines, like their authors, and each word of it
Does say, 'twas writ by a gemini of wit.
How happy is our age! how blest our men!
When such rare souls live themselves o'er again.

[5] ——— *they've together* met
Their shoulders to support a world of wit.] I should not find fault with *met* and *wit* being made rhimes here, (the poets of those times giving themselves such a licence) but that two persons *meeting their shoulders* is neither sense nor English! I am therefore persuaded the author wrote *knit*. So twice in the copy by Jasper Maine:

"*In fame, as well as writings, both so* knit,
That no man knows where to divide your wit."

And again,

"*Nor were you thus in works and poems* knit," &c. *Theobald.*

[6] Chevrel *sense*] *Cheverel* is soft pliable kid leather, and the word occurs in the same manner as in the text in several old plays. Mercutio, in Romeo and Juliet, says, "O, here's a wit of *cheverel* that stretches from an inch narrow to an ell broad."

We err, that think a poet dies; for this
Shews, that 'tis but a metempsychosis.
Beaumont and Fletcher here, at last, we see
Above the reach of dull mortality,
Or power of fate: And thus the proverb hits,
(That's so much cross'd) These men live by their wits.

ALEXR. BROME.[7]

On the Death and Works of Mr JOHN FLETCHER

MY name, so far from great, that 'tis not known,
Can lend no praise but what thou'dst blush to own:
And no rude hand, or feeble wit, should dare
To vex thy shrine with an unlearned tear.
I'd have a state of wit convoked, which hath
A power to take up on common faith;
That, when the stock of the whole kingdom's spent
In but preparative to thy monument,
The prudent council may invent fresh ways
To get new contribution to thy praise,
And rear it high, and equal to thy wit;
Which must give life and monument to it.
So when, late, Essex died,[8] the public face
Wore sorrow in't; and to add mournful grace
To the sad pomp of his lamented fall,
The commonwealth served at his funeral,
And by a solemn order built his hearse;
—But not like thine, built by thyself in verse,
Where thy advanced image safely stands
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands.
Base hands, how impotently you disclose
Your rage 'gainst Camden's learned ashes, whose

[7] A poet of no mean powers, and one of the most strenuous and successful satirists upon the republicans of the time. He was born in 1620 and died 1666. Besides his poems, which principally consist of political songs, he wrote a comedy, entitled The Cunning Lovers.

[8] *So when, late,* Essex *died.*] The Earl of Essex, who had been general for the parliament in the civil war against King Charles the First, died on the 14th of September, 1646, and the first folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's Works was published in 1647.—*Theobald.*

Defaced statua and martyr'd book,
Like an antiquity and fragment look,
Nonnulla desunt's legibly appear,
So truly now Camden's Remains lie there.
Vain malice! how he mocks thy rage, while breath
Of Fame shall speak his great Elizabeth!
'Gainst time and thee he well provided hath;
Britannia is the tomb and epitaph.
Thus princes' honours; but wit only gives
A name which to succeeding ages lives.
Singly we now consult ourselves and fame,
Ambitious to twist ours with thy great name.
Hence we thus bold to praise: For as a vine,
With subtle wreath and close embrace, doth twine
A friendly elm, by whose tall trunk it shoots,
And gathers growth and moisture from its roots;
About its arms the thankful clusters cling
Like bracelets, and with purple ammelling
The blue-cheek'd grape, stuck in its vernant hair,
Hangs like rich jewels in a beauteous ear.
So grow our praises by thy wit; we do
Borrow support and strength, and lend but show.
And but thy male wit,[9] like the youthful sun,
Strongly begets upon our passion,
Making our sorrow teem with elegy.
Thou yet unwept, and yet unpraised might'st be,
But they're imperfect births; and such are all
Produced by causes not univocal,
The scapes of Nature, passives being unfit;
And hence our verse speaks only mother-wit.
Oh, for a fit o' th' father! for a spirit
That might but parcel of thy worth inherit;
For but a spark of that diviner fire,
Which thy full breast did animate and inspire;
That souls could be divided, thou traduce
But a small particle of thine to us!
Of thine; which we admired when thou didst sit
But as a joint-commissioner in wit;
When it had plummets hung on to suppress
Its too luxuriant growing mightiness:
Till, as that tree which scorns to be kept down,
Thou grew'st to govern the whole stage alone;
In which orb thy throng'd light did make the star,
Thou wert the intelligence did move that sphere.

9 *And but thy male wit*, &c.] Mr Seward omits this and the nine following lines.—Ed. 1778.

Thy fury was composed; Rapture no fit
That hung on thee; nor thou far gone in wit
As men in a disease; thy fancy clear,
Muse chaste, as those flames whence they took their fire;[1]
No spurious composures amongst thine,
Got in adultery 'twixt Wit and Wine.
And as the hermetical physicians draw
From things that curse of the first-broken law,
That *ens venenum*, which extracted thence
Leaves nought but primitive good and innocence:
So was thy spirit calcined; no mixtures there
But perfect, such as next to simples are.
Not like those meteor-wits which wildly fly
In storm and thunder through the amazed sky;
Speaking but th' ills and villainies in a state,
Which fools admire, and wise men tremble at,
Full of portent and prodigy, whose gall
Oft 'scapes the vice, and on the man doth fall.
Nature used all her skill, when thee she meant
A wit at once both great and innocent.
Yet thou hadst tooth; but 'twas thy judgment, not
For mending one word a whole sheet to blot.
Thou couldst anatomise with ready art,
And skilful hand, crimes lock'd close up i' th' heart.
Thou couldst unfold dark plots, and shew that path
By which Ambition climb'd to greatness hath;
Thou couldst the rises, turns, and falls of states,
How near they were their periods and dates;
Couldst mad the subject into popular rage,
And the grown seas of that great storm assuage;
Dethrone usurping tyrants, and place there
The lawful prince and true inheriter;
Knew'st all dark turnings in the labyrinth
Of policy, which who but knows he sinn'th,
Save thee, who un-infected didst walk in't,
As the great genius of government.

[1] *Muse chaste, as those frames whence they took their fire;*] This seems obscure, for what are those *frames* whence Fletcher took his fire? The stars? Even if this was meant, I should think *flames* the better word: But as *flames* will signify *heavenly fire* in general, either the stars, sun, angels, or even the Spirit of God himself, who maketh his *ministers flames of fire*, I much prefer the word, and believe it the original. As this poet was a clergyman of character with regard to his sanctity, and much celebrates Fletcher's chastity of sentiments and language, it is very evident that many words which appear gross to us were not so in King Charles the First's age.—*Seward.*

And when thou laidst thy tragic buskin by,
To court the stage with gentle comedy,
How new, how proper th' humours, how express'd
In rich variety, how neatly dress'd
In language, how rare plots, what strength of wit
Shined in the face and every limb of it!
The stage grew narrow while thou grew'st to be
In thy whole life an excellent comedy.
To these a virgin-modesty, which first met
Applause with blush and fear, as if he yet
Had not deserved; till bold with constant praise
His brows admitted the unsought-for bays.
Nor would he ravish Fame; but left men free
To their own vote and ingenuity.
When his fair Shepherdess, on the guilty stage,
Was martyr'd between ignorance and rage;
At which the impatient virtues of those few
Could judge, grew high, cried *murder!* though he knew
The innocence and beauty of his child,
He only, as if unconcerned, smiled.
Princes have gather'd since each scatter'd grace,
Each line and beauty of that injured face;[2]
And on th' united parts breathed such a fire
As, spite of malice, she shall ne'er expire.
Attending, not affecting, thus the crown,
'Till every hand did help to set it on,
He came to be sole monarch, and did reign
In Wit's great empire, absolute sovereign.

JOHN HARRIS.[3]

[2] *Princes have gather'd since each scatter'd grace,*
Each line and beauty of that injured face.] This relates to King Charles the First causing the Faithful Shepherdess to be revived, and acted before him. The lines are extremely beautiful, and do honour to the king's taste in poetry, which, as it comes from an adversary (though certainly a very candid one, and who before condemned the fire-brand-scribblers and meteor-wits of his age) is a strong proof of its being a very good one. Queen Elizabeth may be called the mother of the English poets; James the First was a pedagogue to them, encouraged their literature, but debased it with puns and pedantry; Charles the First revived a good taste, but the troubles of his reign prevented the great effects of his patronage.—*Seward.*

[3] *John Harris* was of New-College, Oxford, Greek professor of the university, and so eminent a preacher that he was called a second Chrysostom. In the civil wars he sided with the presbyterians, and was one of the Assembly of Divines, and is the only poet in this collection whom we certainly know to have been for the parliament against the king. His poem has great merit; the fine break after the mention of the Earl of E--

On Mr FLETCHER'S *ever-to-be-admired Dramatical Works.*

I'VE thought upon't; and thus I may gain bays,
I will commend thee, Fletcher, and thy plays:
But none but wits can do't; how then can I
Come in amongst them that could ne'er come nigh?
There is no other way; I'll throng to sit,
And pass i' th' crowd, amongst them for a wit.
Apollo knows me not, nor I the Nine;
All my pretence to verse is love and wine.
By your leave, gentlemen: you wits o' th' age,
You that both furnished have, and judged the stage;
You, who the poet and the actors fright,
Lest that your censure thin the second night[4]
Pray tell me, gallant wits, could critics think
There e'er was solecism in Fletcher's ink,
Or lapse of plot or fancy in his pen?
A happiness not still allowed to Ben!
After of time and wit he had been at cost,
He, of his own New-Inn, was but an host.
Inspired Fletcher! here's no vain-glorious words;
How even thy lines, how smooth thy sense accords!
Thy language so insinuates, each one
Of thy spectators has thy passion.
Men seeing, valiant, ladies amorous prove,
Thus owe to thee their valour and their love:
Scenes chaste, yet satisfying; ladies can't say
Though Stephen[5] miscarried, that so did the play:
Judgment could ne'er to his opinion lean,
That Lowin, Taylor, e'er could grace thy scene:
'Tis richly good unacted, and to me
The very farce appears a comedy.
Thy drollery is design, each looser part
Stuffs not thy plays, but makes 'em up an art

sex, and the simile of the elm and cluster of grapes, deserve a particular attention.—*Seward.*

Harris was elected fellow of New-College in the year 1606, and died 11th August, 1653.

[4] *The second night.*] This passage supports Mr Malone's supposition that the poet had a share of the profits of the second night.—See *Hist. of the E. Stage*, ut supra, pp. 166, 167.

[5] Stephen Hammerton, a celebrated performer of women's parts of the time, and one of the players who signed the dedication of the first folio.

The stage has seldom seen; how often vice
Is smartly scourged to check us! to intice,
How well encouraged virtue is! how guarded,
And, that which makes us love her, how rewarded!
   Some, I dare say, that did with loose thoughts sit,
Reclaimed by thee, came converts from the pit;
And many a she that to be ta'en up came,
Took up themselves, and after left the game.

HENRY HARINGTON.

To the Memory of the deceased, but ever-living Author, in these his Poems, Mr JOHN FLETCHER.

ON the large train of Fletcher's friends let me
(Retaining still my wonted modesty)
Become a waiter, in my ragged verse,
As follower to the muse's followers.
Many here are of noble rank and worth
That have, by strength of art, set Fletcher forth
In true and lively colours, as they saw him,
And had the best abilities to draw him;
Many more are abroad, that write, and look
To have their lines set before Fletcher's book;
Some, that have known him too; some more, some less,
Some only but by hearsay, some by guess;
And some for fashion-sake would take the hint,
To try how well their wits would shew in print.
You, that are here before me, gentlemen,
And princes of Parnassus by the pen,
And your just judgments of his worth, that have
Preserved this author's memory from the grave,
And made it glorious; let me, at your gate,
Porter it here, 'gainst those that come too late,
And are unfit to enter. Something I
Will deserve here: for, where you versify
In flowing numbers, lawful weight, and time,
I'll write, though not rich verses, honest rhyme.
I am admitted. Now, have at the rout
Of those that would crowd in, but must keep out.
Bear back, my masters; pray keep back; forbear:
You cannot, at this time, have entrance here.
You, that are worthy, may, by intercession,
Find entertainment at the next impression.

But let none then attempt it, that not know
The reverence due, which to this shrine they owe:
All such must be excluded; and the sort,
That only upon trust, or by report,
Have taken Fletcher up, and think it trim
To have their verses planted before him:
Let them read first his works, and learn to know him,
And offer, then, the sacrifice they owe him.
But far from hence be such as would proclaim
Their knowledge of this author, not his fame;
And such, as would pretend, of all the rest,
To be the best wits that have known him best.
Depart hence, all such writers, and before
Inferior ones thrust in, by many a score;
As formerly, before Tom Coryate,
Whose work, before his praisers, had the fate
To perish: For the witty copies took
Of his encomiums made themselves a book.
Here's no such subject for you to out-do,
Out-shine, out-live (though well you may do too
In other spheres:) for Fletcher's flourishing bays
Must never fade, while Phœbus wears his rays.
Therefore forbear to press upon him thus.
Why, what are you, (cry some) that prate to us?
Do not we know you for a flashy meteor?
And styled (at best) the muses' serving-creature?
Do you control? Ye've had your jeer: Sirs, no,
But, in an humble manner, let you know,
Old serving-creatures oftentimes are fit
To inform young masters, as in land, in wit,
What they inherit; and how well their dads
Left one, and wish'd the other to their lads.
And, from departed poets, I can guess
Who has a greater share of wit, who less.
'Way, fool! another says. I let him rail,
And, 'bout his own ears flourish his wit-flail,
Till, with his swing, he his noddle break,
While this of Fletcher, and his works, I speak;
His works? (says Momus) nay, his plays, you'd say.
Thou hast said right, for that to him was play
Which was to others' brains a toil: With ease
He play'd on waves, which were their troubled seas.
His nimble births have longer lived than theirs
That have, with strongest labour, divers years
Been sending forth the issues of their brains
Upon the stage; and shall, to th' stationers' gains,

Life after life take, till some after-age
Shall put down printing, as this doth the stage;
Which nothing now presents unto the eye,
But in dumb-shows her own sad tragedy.
'Would there had been no sadder works abroad,
Since her decay, acted in fields of blood!
 But to the man again, of whom we write,
The writer that made writing his delight,
Rather than work. He did not pump, nor drudge,
To beget wit, or manage it; nor trudge
To wit-conventions with note-book, to glean,
Or steal, some jests to foist into a scene;
He scorn'd those shifts. You, that have known him, know
The common talk; that from his lips did flow,
And run at waste, did savour more of wit,
Than any of his time, or since, have writ
(But few excepted) in the stage's way:
His scenes were acts, and every act a play.
I knew him in his strength; even then, when he,
That was the master of his art and me,[6]
Most knowing Jonson (proud to call him son,)
In friendly envy swore he had out-done
His very self. I knew him till he died;
And, at his dissolution, what a tide
Of sorrow overwhelm'd the stage; which gave
Vollies of sighs to send him to his grave,
And grew distracted in most violent fits,
For she had lost the best part of her wits.
In the first year, our famous Fletcher fell,
Of good King Charles, who graced these poems well,
Being then in life of action: But they died
Since the king's absence; or were laid aside,
As is their poet. Now, at the report
Of the king's second coming to his court,
The books creep from the press to life, not action;
Crying unto the world, that no protraction
May hinder sacred majesty to give
Fletcher, in them, leave on the stage to live.

[6] *Master of his art and me.*] Mr Richard Brome was many years a servant to Ben Jonson (an amanuensis, I presume) and learned the art of writing comedy under him. Upon this Ben compliments him in a short poem prefixed to Brome's Northern Lass—

"I had you for a servant once, Dick Brome,
 And you perform'd a servant's faithful parts;
Now you are got into a nearer room
 Of fellowship, professing my old arts," &c. *Theobald.*

Others may more in lofty verses move,
I only thus express my truth and love.

RICH. BROME.[7]

Upon the Printing of Mr JOHN FLETCHER'S *Works.*

WHAT means this numerous guard? or, do we come
To file our names, or verse, upon the tomb
Of Fletcher, and, by boldly making known
His wit, betray the nothing of our own?
For, if we grant him dead, it is as true
Against ourselves, no wit, no poet now;
Or if he be return'd from his cool shade
To us, this book his resurrection's made:
We bleed ourselves to death, and but contrive
By our own epitaphs to shew him alive.
But let him live! and let me prophesy,
As I go swan-like out,[8] our peace is nigh:
A balm unto the wounded age I sing,
And nothing now is wanting but the king.

JA. SHIRLEY.[9]

The Stationer.

As after th' epilogue there comes some one
To tell spectators what shall next be shown,

[7] A comic author of considerable humour, particularly in the delineation of low life. Among his plays, The Northern Lass, The Jovial Crew, and the Sparagus Garden, deserve to be mentioned with distinction.

[8] *As I go swan-like out.*] In allusion to his verses being the last in the collection.

[9] Mr Shirley was publisher of the first folio edition in 1647.—*Seward.* By *publisher*, we suppose Mr Seward means editor; this Mr Shirley certainly was not. It is true he wrote the preface, but it would be exceedingly unjust to that great man to believe he did more for, or at least could be editor of, so incorrect a book.—Ed. 1778.

So here am I; but though I've toiled and vext,
'Cannot devise what to present ye next;
For since ye saw no plays this cloudy weather,
Here we have brought ye our whole stock together.
'Tis new, and all these gentlemen attest
Under their hands, 'tis right and of the best;
Thirty-four witnesses[1] (without my task)
Ye have just so many plays (besides a masque)
All good, I'm told, as have been read or played:
If this book fail, 'tis time to quit the trade.

H. MOSELEY.

Postscript.—We forgot to tell the reader that some prologues and epilogues here inserted were not written by the authors of this volume, but made by others on the revival of several plays. After the comedies and tragedies were wrought off, we were forced, for expedition, to send the gentlemen's verses to several printers, which was the occasion of this different character; but the work itself is one continued letter, which, though very legible, is none of the biggest, because, as much as possible, we would lessen the bulk of the volume.[2]

Verses under the Portrait of FLETCHER.

Felicis ævi ac præsulis natus; comes
Beaumontii [illegible]; sic, quippe Parnassus, biceps;
Fletcherus unam in pyramida furcas agens.
Struxit chorum plus simplicem vates duplex;
Plus duplicem solus: nec ullum trans[illegible];
Nec transferendus: Dramatum æterni [illegible]

[1] *Thirty-four witnesses.*] Humphrey Moseley makes a similar enumeration at the conclusion of the commendatory verses on Cartwright:

—— "as many hands attest it here,
As there are shires in England, weeks i' th' year."

[2] So far the first folio. The following Latin lines [illegible] subjoined to the portrait of Fletcher in the same copy; the verses [illegible] Beaumont's brother are from his poems, and three other [illegible]

This collection might have been extended by the [illegible] of G. Lucy, Thomas Pestell, and T. G.; the second of which is printed by Mr Nichols in his History of Leicestershire. There are, however, a sufficient number of these commendatory poems already.

Anglo theatro, orbi, sibi, superstites.
Fletchere, facies absque vultu pingitur;
Quantus! vel umbram circuit nemo tuam.

J. BERKENHEAD.

An Epitaph upon my dear Brother, FRANCIS BEAUMONT.

[From Sir John Beaumont's Poems.]

ON Death, thy murd'rer, this revenge I take:
I slight his terror, and just question make,
Which of us two the best precedence have,
Mine to this wretched world, thine to the grave:
Thou should'st have followed me, but Death, to blame,
Miscounted years, and measured age by fame:
So dearly hast thou bought thy precious lines,
Their praise grew swiftly, so thy life declines:
Thy muse, the hearer's queen, the reader's love,
All ears, all hearts, (but Death's) could please and move.

From The Stage, a Poem, written in the Year 1713, by Dr REYNARDSON, *and addressed to Mr* ADDISON.

BUT, like the Graces, moving hand and hand,
Fletcher and Beaumont next the crown command,
The first too far presuming on his wit,
His lavish lays luxuriantly writ,
Whilst Beaumont modell'd every darling thought,
And interposed his beautifying blot;
Taught him to manage the Pierian steed,
Or curb him close, or urge his utmost speed.
  Minerva thus to rout the Thracian god,
In the same chariot with Tydides rode;
She wields the whip, his forward courage chides,
His fiery self, and fiery coursers guides,
Now checks their haste, now thunders o'er the plain,
The hero darts the spear, the goddess rules the rein.
  Fletcher, when fired with a poetic heat,
Was ever rambling after rant and wit,

'Twas then his friend, all fortified with rules,
Show'd him the scene could tickle none but fools.
Convinced, amazed, the guilty poet stood,
And blushed himself should ever think it good.
So Bacchus, when he drove his conqu'ring car
O'er sun-burnt climes, and urged the Indian war,
Soon as the gen'rous grape had reach'd his head,
His troops to many a rash adventure led;
Silenus saw the fault, by his advice
The god allay'd his rage, and cool'd his cup with ice.

From Fenton's Epistle to Southern, (Jan. 28, 1710-11.)

But, like the radiant twins that gild the sphere,
Fletcher and Beaumont next in pomp appear:
The first a fruitful vine, in blooming pride,
Had been by superfluity destroyed,
But that his friend, judiciously severe,
Pruned the luxuriant boughs with artful care;
On various sounding harps the muses played
And sung, and quaff'd their nectar in the shade.
Few moderns in the lists with these may stand,
For in those days were giants in the land:
Suffice it now by lineal right to claim,
And bow with filial awe to Shakspeare's fame;
The second honours are a glorious name.
Achilles dead, they found no equal lord
To wear his armour, and to wield his sword.

Names of the principal Actors who performed in Beaumont *and* Fletcher's *Plays.*

N. B.—The names marked thus * are the names of the Players who dedicated the edition of 1647 to the Earl of Pembroke.[4]

William Allen
Hugh Atawell
Richard Burbadge

* Theophilus Byrd
* Robert Benfield
George Birch
William Barksted
Thomas Basse

Henry Condel
Alexander Cooke
* Hugh Clearke

William Eglestone

Nathaniel Field

Sander Gough
Giles Gary

Thomas Holcombe
* Stephen Hammerton
John Honyman

James Horn

* John Lowin

William Ostler

* Thomas Pollard
William Penn

Emanuel Read
John Rice
* Richard Robinson
William Rowly

Richard Sharpe
Eylærd Swanston
John Shank

* Joseph Taylor
Nicholas Toolie
William Trigg
John Thomson

John Underwood.

[4] This list was made out in Seward's edition from the actors' names prefixed to several of the plays in the second folio. It has been retained in the present edition; but the separate enumerations to the several plays will be found restored from the second folio.

THE FAITHFUL FRIENDS.



THE FAITHFUL FRIENDS.

THIS Tragi-comedy was entered in the Stationers' Books the 29th of June, 1660, together with A Right Woman and The History of Mador, the latter attributed to Beaumont, and the former, as well as the present play, to both our authors. They were, however, never printed; and it is to be feared the two latter are entirely lost. The Faithful Friends is now first published from an original manuscript, purchased by the proprietors of the present edition from Mr John Smith of Furnival's Inn, into whose possession it came from Mr Theobald, nephew to the editor of Shakspeare. The manuscript is in folio, and written in a tolerably legible hand, excepting where the text is altered, or where passages are expunged, being omitted in the representation,[1] as the MS. is evidently a prompter's copy. In the facsimile annexed, the lines marked No. I. are in the hand-writing of the original MS., those marked No. III. are in another more modern, in which the beginning, and the two concluding speeches, are supplied. No. II. is a facsimile of part of the last scene of the fourth act, which is added on a detached paper, in an ancient hand, probably by the author of that scene.[2]

If we judge by the versification, we must conclude, that Fletcher had a very inconsiderable share in the composition of this drama. The metre bears a nearer resemblance to that of Beaumont. From the frequent and very gross historical blunders and anachronisms, however, which occur, particularly in the latter

[1] As the regulation of a prompter's copy of that age is curious, the passages completely expunged (though still legible) have been printed in italics, and those which are only crossed through, or have a marginal line drawn along them, have been marked with inverted commas.

[2] See the notes subjoined to that scene.

part,[3] and from the very small merit of some of the scenes, I should be inclined to attribute the greater portion of the play to an inferior assistant, as we know that the booksellers were ever ready to father the whole of a play upon the author of the greatest repute, though he, perhaps, contributed only a small portion.

The general merit of this tragi-comedy is by no means very striking, and it must be ranked in the lowest class of the dramatic productions collected in these volumes. The plot has some share of interest, but it is greatly injured by the violation of probability in the strange conduct of the king, who appears to the reader a most hypocritical villain, though the authors seem to have intended him to act on virtuous principles, and to employ bad means for good purposes. Indeed none of the characters are delineated with great precision. That of Philadelpha bears considerable family likeness to many virtuous females in the comedies of our authors, but it will not stand a comparison with such characters as Aspatia and Juliana. Lelia is in the same predicament, being but a faint shadow of Euphrasia. The two friends, Marcus Tullius and Armanus, as well as Marius, have no very strongly marked features; they are virtuous young men, such as occur in many of the dramas of the time. The most striking portions of the play are the parting scene of Tullius and Philadelpha; the conferences between Rufinus and the king, which are managed with considerable art; and the scene in which Armanus feigns to tempt the virtue of his friend's wife. The meeting of that character with Tullius, Marius, and Lelia, in the forest, will remind the reader of some parts of Philaster. The scenes of humour are not of the highest excellency, but there is a considerable degree of drollery in the mock-heroic character of Sir Pergamus.

[3] Such as the mention of Philip of Spain and the Duke of Lerma, of Macchiavelli, Poppæa, Philip of Macedon, and Cæsar, of both the Indies, and of perspective glasses; and in the scene added to the fourth act, we have mention made of cannon, of John of Gaunt, and of Guildhall.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Titus Martius, *king of Rome.*
Marcus Tullius, *the Roman general.*
Old Tullius, *his father, a senator.*
Marcellanus, *a senator, father to Philadelpha.*
Armanus, *friend to Marcus Tullius.*
Marius, *friend to Tullius, and lover of Lelia.*
Rufinus,
Learchus, } *Captains, and enemies to Tullius.*
Leontius,
Marcellus, *a Roman captain.*
Sabinus, *general of the Sabines.*
Arminius, *a Sabine captain.*
Sir Pergamus, *a humorous knight, in love with Flavia.*
Bellario, *an old soldier.*
Snipsnap, *a tailor.*
Blacksnout, *a smith.*
Calveskin, *a shoemaker.*
Pedester.
Senators, Lictors, Flamens, Constable, Officers, Tapster, Sutler, Heralds, Postmaster, Messengers, Petitioners, and Attendants.

Philadelpha, *wife to Marcus Tullius.*
Lelia, *disguised as Janus, her page ; sister to Tullius.*
Flavia, *servant to Philadelpha.*
Ladies and Attendants.

SCENE—, Rome, and the Country of the Sabines.

THE FAITHFUL FRIENDS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Rome. Before the Capitol.

Enter MARIUS, RUFINUS, *and* LEONTIUS.

Ruf. You have made a large relation, but more rare,
Of your experienced travels; and I fear
You will depopulate our court and land
Of the most noble youths; who, being fired
By your rich benefit, will like lightning fly
To purchase fame and honour.

Leont. You're full fraught
With many kingdoms' virtues.

Mar. Sir, you flatter now,
And do outprize my willing industry:
Yet, without boast, I have been no drone, my lords,
To suck up others' labours; nor, as many
Of our nobles do, purchased new fashions
With the loss of lands; nor spent my five years travels

To bring home a Spanish block,[1] or a French
compliment,
A German health,[2] or English tilting-staff;
Nor fiddled out my time in capering:
Yet these, nor any other active exercises
That can be added to adorn the state
Of a true gentleman, are strange to one,
Occasion best will witness. But, my lords,
I have not yet, in the least syllable,
Received the knowledge of domestic things;
What change of state, of friends, or enemies;
The custom of the court; who are in grace:
Lest my long absence hence may make me ignorant,
Of due respect deserved by noble merit;
And who is favourite to the king?
I would be loth to appear ridiculous
In any errors at first interview.

[1] *A Spanish* block.] That is, a hat in the Spanish fashion. The *block* is probably the form on which the hat is shaped, but the word was frequently used for the hat itself. So in The Revenger's Tragedy:

——" Come, brother, ere next clock,
His head will be made serve a bigger *block*."

[2] *A German health.*] The renown of toping was, at the time, principally enjoyed by the Danes and Germans, and the fame of the latter was spread, not only in England, but France, Spain, and Italy, the numerous German mercenaries in those countries affording frequent opportunities to the natives to observe their propensity to the bottle. Tassoni, for instance, has the following lines in his Secchia Rapita:

" Bacco chiamò i Tedeschi a quell' impresa,
E andò fino in Germania ad invitalli.
Essi, quand' ebber la sua voglia intesa,
In un momento armar' tanti e cavalli,
Benedicendo ottobre, e san Martino,
E sperando natar tutti nel vino."

Ruf. You have outstripped the wing of our desires:
We did reserve it with [a] full intent
To make a just return to your relation.
Mar. My thoughts thirst for it.
Ruf. You knew young Tullius?
Mar. Servius Tullius' son?
Ruf. The same.
Mar. Pray on.
Ruf. He was a man, you know, of no great birth.
Leont. A gentleman; that's all.
Mar. A king's, no more.
Ruf. He is the only gallant of the times,
The court's chief school, master in arts and arms:
The chief star that adorns this hemisphere
Is thrown into his bosom for his bride.
Mar. Her name, Rufinus?
Ruf. 'Tis beauteous Philadelpha, the sole daughter
Of Marcellanus, our chief senator.
Mar. A lovely dame; Rome wants her parallel,
Except my saint, the bright-cheeked Lelia.
Ruf. The solemn graces, hymeneal sports,
And revellings at this great nuptial,
Cannot by the tongue of wonder be compared.
Millions were lavished in excessive sports,
And piebald pageantry.
And then the open favours of the king,
Crowned with the gaping multitude,
Made Atlas shake with laughter.
Mar. When was this, my lords?
Ruf. Some two days since:
The happy bridegroom has not yet, I am sure,
Plucked the Hesperian fruit; 'twas her desire
To lie three nights alone; your courtlike way
To make them feed the freer when they meet.

Mar. I curse my slow speed
That made mine eye a stranger to these sights.
Ruf. Rather adore that deity that detained you.
Mar. Do you then malign his happiness,[3]
Young Tullius' honours, and my sovereign's grace?
Ruf. Do we! Who does not? and contemn them too,
As——
Mar. I do you,
Or any that true worth shall emulate.[4]
I know young Tullius is a noble youth,
Endued with virtues and perfections
Fitting to rank with our best Roman blood.
Ruf. Leont. Ha, ha, ha, ha!
Mar. Do you laugh?
By all our gods, Rufinus, Tullius' merits
Deserve those graces are bestowed upon him
Better than any one that envies them.
Ruf. How, Marius?
Mar.[5] Pish! 'gainst the winds look big.

[3] *Do you then malign then his happiness.*] So the MS.

[4] *Or any that true worth shall* emulate.] This verb is here used plainly for *envy*, and this passage supports Mr Malone's interpretation of *emulous* in the following passage of Troilus and Cressida, *viz.* envious "A good quarrel to draw *emulous* factions, and bleed to death upon." Steevens says this signifies merely *rival* factions. The word occurs again, with the same sense, in the third scene of this act

——Your great lord, for such is the king's love,
Must go as general to correct their pride,
An honour that great princes *emulate.*

[5] *Mar.*] Here the original MS. begins, the preceding speeches being written in a somewhat later hand-writing.—See the Introduction.

Enter LEARCHUS.

Learch. That bigness blew me hither.
Ruf. In post, Learchus?
Learch. 'Foot! had I wings like Perseus, and could fly,
I were too slow-paced to divulge this news.
Leont. What is't, i' th' name of wonder?
Learch. For firm truth,
The Sabines are in arms, whose stubborn necks
These many years stooped to the yoke of Rome,
Now shake their fetters off, and with sharp steel
Swear to enlarge their former privilege.
Ruf. This your tidings?
The expectation takes the strangeness off:
It has been long suspected.
Learch. You're too greedy,
And glut your appetites with the first dish:
I have a feast of news yet.
Who do you think is chosen general,
And command given for a present press,
Of our most ablest, expert soldiers,
Ten thousand horse, and twenty thousand foot,
To quell this hot rebellion?
Ruf. Who but we?
Learch. You have been.
Ruf. May be thyself, Learchus?
Learch. No, no, no.
Ruf. Then 'tis Leontius?
Learch. You are wider still.
Ruf. Who else is fit to bear't, and we put by?
Learch. Who but the warlike Tullius?
Ruf. That milksop! 'Sure the king
Will make an idol of him.'
Learch. Who should command but he that awes command?

Tullius is general, and, with greatest pomp,
Is coming this way; *the king leaning thus*
Upon his soldier: eyeing as they pass
The looks and gestures of each gazer-on,
How they relish his election.

Ruf. 'But rawly, without salt;
They have a fresh soldier to their general.'

Mar. Your bitterness makes the digestion harsh:
'In my conceit, he that endeavours well,
Though he come short of him that hath performed
Something worth praise, deserves far more commends
Than those that boast their actions; it takes off
The lustre that belongs to't. Pardon me
If I make question of your loyalties,
That dare disparage thus my sovereign's choice
Of his respected subjects: it infers
A doubt made of his wisdom. Why should we
Tax the prerogative pleasures of our prince?
Whom he shall grace, or where bestow his favours?
That law's allowed to every private man:
Then, to confine or disallow a king,
Were most injurious and preposterous.
*For as * * * * * * * * as they're gods,*[6]
They are subject to their passions as they're men:
Alexander the Great had his Hephestion,
Philip of Spain his Lerma: Not to offend,
I could produce from courts that I have seen
More royal precedents,[7] *but I'll not give*

[6] *For as * * * * * * * * as their gods.*] There is a lacuna left in the MS. in this line.

[7] —— *Not to offend,*
I could produce from courts that I have seen
More royal precedents, &c.] This seems plainly to allude to

Such satisfaction to detractive tongues,
That publish such foul noise against a man
I know for truly virtuous.
' *Ruf. Learch. Leon.* Ha, ha, ha!
Learch. What's he
That takes upon him thus to contradict
What we shall please to censure?
Ruf. 'Tis young Marius,
He that was severed from fair Lelia,
Old Tullius' daughter.
Learch. Alas, poor lover! these are frantic fits:
He adores Tullius for his sister's sake.'
Ruf. Now the great general comes.
Leon. How fierce he looks!

Enter MARCELLUS, *leading; Drums and Colours;* TITUS MARTIUS, MARCUS TULLIUS, ARMANUS, *Soldiers, and Attendants.*

Mar. The blessings of the gods be multiplied
To add increase of glory and renown
To Titus Martius, my dread sovereign,
And to the general, fame, and victory.
Titus. Thy last fair wish begets a double thanks.
Rise, Marius.
Thy virtue was the harbinger to prepare
A welcome to thy country; but to us
That exiled thee from Rome, and from thy bliss,
The beauteous Lelia, our command shall crown
Your loves with a rich dowry; she is thine.
Mar. A bounty, sir, I prize above my life.
All joys reward you, noble Tullius.
' *M. Tul.* Welcome as what I long for, victory!'

the favoritism of King James I. The very gross and absurd anachronisms in this speech have been already noticed in the preliminary remarks on this play.

Arm. With like arms I embrace you.
All. So do all.—
Ruf. There's a young demi-god too: With what grace
The king doth entertain him!
Learch. Oh, my lord,
Must he not be allied to Tullius?
Ruf. I cry you mercy, I had forgot that.
Leon. 'Foot, we're not minded here; these dung-hill-cocks
Flutter their feathers so before his eyes,
He does or will not see us.
Ruf. It is no matter: let 'em use their wings,
We shall sit heavily upon their skirts for't.—
Titus. We'll leave our Tullius now, and back to court:
Time must allow some hours for a kind leave
'Twixt you and your fair bride; 'we'll not be by
To see so sad a parting.'
M. Tull. Royal sir,
'Howe'er the thought of danger may beget
Some sorrow for my absence, being divorced
Ere Hymen's rites are fully finished;
Yet, when her love shall look upon the cause
Commands my service, and this three-fold grace
Conferred on me by you, she will with smiles
Turn from me; her chief care
Is of my honour, not my dalliance.
'*Titus.* Thou deifiest her with this character;
Yet she deserves a larger.' Farewell Marcus,
Mars guide thy marches, Peace thy footsteps home!
'*M. Tull.* I live but for your safety.'
Titus. Ours in thine. [*Exit.*
Ruf. Leon. Learch. Ha, ha, ha! [*Exeunt.*
Mar. [*Detaining* TULLIUS.] Could you dispense, sir, with your high affairs,

I'd gladly borrow some short conference.
M. Tull. I'll lend it, sir, most willing: I wish time
Would engage me for the like courtesy.
' *Mar.* I'll not be tedious, trust me.'
M. Tull. Worthy friend, [*To* ARMANUS.
Take off the edge of Philadelpha's grief
For this short separation; be you the first
That shall acquaint her with my great command,
It will abate some of the bitterness,
And mitigate her passions ere we meet,
To make our parting sweeter.
Arm. Friend, I shall, and, with persuasive speech,
Arm her with patience to beat back sad thoughts,
And hoodwink danger with your honour's veil.
M. Tull. I know you need no tutor. I'll exchange
Some words with Marius, whose approach, I pray
You'd certify my bride before we come,
For I intend to bring him.
Arm. Your best pleasure.
M. Tull. You shall not want us long.
Arm. We'll all attend you.
[*Exit, with* MARCELLUS *and Soldiers.*
Mar. Now let me freely fold thee, noble lord:
All bars that stood betwixt us are removed,
Great Martius' frown, our fathers' enmity,
Caused by the antipathy of honour's stem,
Which your deserts have levelled. Their stern hate,
That strived to contradict our plighted faiths,
Which long ere this had linked [to you] a brother,*
I hope is reconciled. Good, bless me then
To hear of my dear Lelia: is she well?

* *Which long ere this had linked a brother.*] So the MS.

Hath not my discontinuance, and harsh threats
Of both our parents, forced her timorous sex
To shun my wished embraces, and give up
Her heart and hand unto some resident suitor?
My soul is racked till you dissolve my fears.

M. Tull. And mine till you resolve me to what end
You ask these frivolous questions. Good, my lord,
Now is no time to dwell on circumstance,
And I am something wondered you should make
A doubt of Lelia's faith,
Having the cabinet in your custody
That does contain the jewel: 'Tis a prize,
(Wear it!) the richest in love's lottery,
Won from a woman: Sir, remember that.
Yet such a spotless worth fame crowns you with,
I do not fear the preservation on't;
But 'tis your own, howsoever lasting joy.[9]
Now make me happy to partake her welfare:
How does my sister?

Mar. Ha!

M. Tull. You have made a sad old man: the king's entreats,
Persuades of friends,[1] business of state, my honours,
Marriage rites, nor aught that can be named,
Since Lelia's loss, can move him from the place

[9] *But 'tis your own, howsoever lasting joy.*] If this is correct it must mean, "It is your own joy, however long it may last." I suspect some corruption to have taken place.

[1] —*The king's* entreats,
Persuades *of friends.*] I do not recollect having met with *entreat* and *persuade*, as substantives in any other place. In the same manner, *entertain* is used for entertainment, in act iii. scene ii.

In which he lives a retired life and much disconsolate.

Mar. I dare not understand you. Lelia lost?

M. Tull. To all but you. Why do you dally thus,
Trifling with that is now so precious?
If you will glad an aged father's heart
With sight of his sole daughter, questionless
The joy will seal your pardon:
You're not the first has stol'n a handsome lady.
Good Marius, do not linger.

Mar. Hold for Heaven's sake!
You have condemned me of a fact, which I
Of force must die, because not guilty of't.[2]
Hear me, dear Tullius: Witness all our gods,
If ever since the time of our divorce,
Signed by your father's hate, and king's command,
When I set forth to travel, I e'er saw
Or heard of my sweet Lelia,
All lovers' curses seize me, and my life
Languish in torments unexpressible!

M. Tull. In this belief I am wretched: 'Would you had, sir!
Till now her loss was nothing: Since that time
That an ill-twisted fate divided you,
My sister ne'er was seen; all Rome conceived,
And did not spare to speak it, for your sake
All comforts else she banished.

Mar. And from me
All other joys for ever.

M. Tull. From my breast
She has forced millions of contented thoughts,

[2] *You have condemned me of a fact, which I of force Must dy because not guilty of 't.*] If this is correct, it is nevertheless obscure: for why should the *innocence* of Marius *enforce* his *death*?—To give the speech any shew of meaning, we must re-

And placed cold cakes of sorrow. Worthy sir,
Let my example mitigate your grief,
And smother it a while; our better stars
May work more fair effects, and she be found
When rumour shall report your safe return.
This news would soon shorten my father's days,
For he is fixed upon't she fled with you.
Were Rome in peace, or my command ta'en off,
I'd take a pilgrimage in search of her,
Though I left joys above Elysium.

Mar. You speak beyond a brother, loving Tullius.

M. Tull. For my sake, then, conceal her loss a while,
Lest it should raise a censure of despair.

Mar Despair!
Death durst not teint a goodness with such sin:
That thought shall ne'er afflict me for her loss.
The key of silence here shall lock it up
Close from the world and you.
I would not have a partner in my woe,
For that, like her, solely belongs to me;
Yet, lest deep melancholy drive my sense
To range the world in madness, I'll cast off
All show of discontent, and, with my sword,
Assist you in this hot hostility.

M. Tull. Your company's a second life to me.

[*Exeunt.*

member Tullius is a *lover*, who, with the exaggeration natural to that character, may regret that he was not guilty of the fact of having stolen his mistress, as it would have given him the possession of her whose loss must of force be his death.

SCENE II.

A Tavern.

BELLARIO, *a tattered Soldier*, BLACKSNOUT, *a Smith*, SNIPSNAP, *a Tailor*, CALVESKIN, *a Shoemaker*, *sitting round a Table, every one Pots in their Hand. Enter Tapster.*

Snip. Some more drink, boy.
Tap. You shall, sir, by and by.
Black. Come, my brave soldier,
Take off thy basting, bully! By this hand,
You shall not pay a farthing of this reckoning:
I am Blacksnout still.
Bell Pay? What word's that?
Oh, disgrace to a man of resolution!
Name pay in time of peace.
Calve. Stay, be not angry, my bold swash-buckler:[3]
He means thou shalt not pay for what's come in.
Snip. *No more he shall not, by this thimble, whilst I have*

[3] *Swash-buckler.*] This was a common appellation bestowed at the time on those riotous, fighting ruffians or martialists, who seem to have been a great annoyance to the peaceful citizens, and who were often a theme for the satirists of the day. Bellario, in his speeches, enumerates all the several means by which these roaring companions, (frequently discarded officers who had served in the Netherlands,) lived.

A groat: I should have two two-pences, I mistake else.
Not a doit, by this drink! So here's to thee, boy.
[Drinks.

Bell. No, nor you neither, my fine fox-catchers!
Pay? 'tis against my profession:
I have a bitch shall bite him to the bone
Dares ask but such a question. 'Las! you are fresh men:
I'm an old weather-beaten soldier, that, whilst drum
And trumpets terrified cowards, had the world
At will; but in this armour-rusting peace
I'm glad to change god Mars for Mercury,
And pick a living out of my wits.

Snip. Pick, I allow you:
Give me a trade, say I; I'll undertake
To finish more suits in a year than any
Two lawyers in the town, and get as much
By th' hand too; 'tis well known we purchase[4] now-a-days
As well as they.

Black. Why not? Your fees go all one way:
Lawyers and tailors have their several hells.

Calve. Well fare the honest gentle-craft, my hearts,
Our labour always comes to a good end.

Black. Peace, Calveskin! your thin sole takes water.

Calve. 'Tis want of liquor then.—Some more drink, sirrah!

Black. Which of you all can hold out tack with Blacksnout,
The horse-shoemaker? It is always good
When a man has two irons in the fire:

[4] *Purchase.*] That is, acquire property.

We seldom have cold doings.
Snip. I'd be loth
To have nothing but my wits to live upon.[5]
Black. I believe thee, thou wouldst have none at all then.
Snip. 'Tis but a threadbare living at the best.
Bell. 'Sfoot, ye all talk
Like a company of sprat-fed mechanics.
I tell you, my sincere jobbernowls, I would not change
The revenues that this brain brings me in yearly
For ne'er a trade-fall'n citizen's in Europe,
Though their charter were sealed, to swear and lie by authority.
Calve. Is't possible?
Bell. There's many a trim gallant in this town
That lives by nothing else, and bravely too.
'Las! we have comings-in that every goose
I' th' city thinks not of: as, for example,—
Sit round.
Black. Sit round, sit round.
Bell. I'll explain
This mystery: Here's a young high-mettled lady,
Whilst her unable lord lies languishing
In a lingering consumption, she, poor soul,
Is almost pined for want of necessaries:
Who must help this malady but Bellario,
A lusty well-timbered fellow? yet no loggerhead—
Mistake me not.
Black. No, no, you are i' th' right.
Bell. And there, besides a satin suit,
With all things correspondent, cap-a-pie;
These coffers are furnished for a month or two.

[5] *To have no other living but my wits.*] So the line is altered in the MS. in an old hand.

Snip. Good, i'faith.
Black. I begin to relish this.
Bell. Then this brave cavaliero
Is openly baffled in his mistress' sight,
And dares not fight himself; who must maintain
This quarrel but Bellario? And so some forty
Or fifty crusadoes entice my trusty friend here
To leave his peaceful mansion, to make good
His reputation.
Calve. What do you think of this?
Black. Better and better still.—Some more drink, boy.
Bell. Next, here's a rich devouring cormorant
Comes up to town, with his leathern budget stuffed
Till it crack again, to empty it upon a company
Of spruce clerks and squalling lawyers, when 'twere fitter
Such honest lads as myself had it; that, instead
Of pedlar's French[6] gives him plain language for his money,—
Stand and deliver! besides all the prayers
Of the poor people in a country, whom
This cut-throat would have undone in a term-time.
Is not this fit?
Snip. Very necessary, I protest to you.
Bell. To proceed—
Black. Ay, to proceed. Here's to you. [*Drinks.*
Bell. This new-come novice
Would be instructed in the generous garb;[7]

[6] *Pedlar's French.*] A word still usual for the cant language of beggars and thieves.

[7] —— *This new-come novice*
Would be instructed in the generous garb.] A frequent object of satire in the old comedies, is this kind of pupillage; a youth coming out of the country with little sense, and less experience, is

This tiffany-trader wants customers; I thrust 'em together.
This greasy citizen would put off some musty commodity,[8]
That some young heir would half hang himself to take up:
I help all these, and all these help me. The honest whore, Fortune,
Finds a thousand ways to pleasure her favourites.
Now, my fine finger-blowing, cross-legged companions,
Is not wit an unknown legacy?

Snip. Ay, I'll be sworn is't.
I'd spend a crown to see my father's will;
Sure he left me that unknown legacy.
He was once mayor o' th' town.

Black. I should have wit,
I was a soldier once.

Snip Calve. Thou a soldier?

Black. Yes, and have been shot too.

Snip With a pot-gun.

Black. No, Snipsnap,[9] nor a goose gun,
But with a bullet as big as a penny-loaf:
Thou would'st have eat it ere thou hadst suffered it.

Bell. Where? Where about was't, Blacksnout?

persuaded by some of these martialists to put himself under their tuition, and is accordingly fleeced of his money. Every reader of Ben Jonson will recollect the cavaliero Shift's lessons to Sogliardo; and, among other plays in which this folly is ridiculed, Brome's Sparagus Garden may be mentioned where Tim Hoyden is transformed into a gentleman, by Sir Hugh Moneylack and his sharking companions. To the same class, the roaring school, in Middleton and Rowley's Fair Quarrel, belongs.

[8] *Some musty commodity.*] See vol. XI. p. 167.

[9] *No, tailor.*] Thus altered by an old hand in the MS.

Black. In the groin.
'Twas at the siege of Bunnil, passing the straights
'Twixt Mayor's-lane and Terra del Fuego, the fiery isle.

Bell. Hot service, by my faith.

Black. Phew! nothing to me:
He is no good smith that ne'er burnt his fingers.
Here, soldier, here's to thee.

Snip. Does't call me soldier? I tell thee I scorn't:
I am a tailor, and as good a man as thyself.

Black. As good a man as I? Snipsnap, thou liest.[1]

Snip. Lie? Oh, my patience! I'd give forty drachmas
I were a gentleman, that I might fight with thee.

Cake. Nay, nay, no quarrelling: Some more drink, Tapster.—
Pray help me to make them friends; the tailor, sir,
Is something cross sometimes, and so's the smith,
Too hot and fiery.

Bell. Come, Blacksnout, drink to him.

Black. I care not if I do.

Snip. Care not? Nay then—

Black. What then?

Snip. I care not if I pledge thee.

Bell. So, so, this is well.

Cake. Of all things in the world I cannot endure
This foolish quarrelling. My wife and I have a bout
Sometimes, but I always come by the worst on't.

Snip. More drink, Tapster.

[1] *Snipsnap, thou liest.*] These words, and the rest of the scene to the entrance of Marcellus, are crossed out in the MS. being omitted in the representation.

Tap. Sir, my master
Will let me draw no more till this be paid for.
Snip. Does he misdoubt our payment? Then there's for you:
Go change me that cracked crown. [*Strikes him.*
Bell. Oh, brave Snipsnap! Who said he durst not fight?
Tap. Well, sir, you'll dearly answer this:
My master's constable; he'll trounce you for't.
Snip. Dost tell me of a constable?
Black. A constable's
An ass. I've been a constable myself.
Calve. I was head-borough then, you know.

Enter Constable and Officers.

Const. How now?
What coil is here?
Black. Level coil, you see, every man's pot.
Const. Which is he, sirrah?
Tap. He, sir, that struts it so.
Const. I do command thee stand, in the king's name.
Black. You must write great letters then.
Const. I do command thee stand.
Snip. Well, so I do:
Now I sit down again.
Const. Thou hast broke my man's head
Here, in my own house.
Snip. That's a lie,
I broke't within the length of my own yard.
Const. Neighbours, what were I best lay to his charge?
It is no felony nor burglary.
1 *Off.* Yes, but 'tis;
Is't not burglary to break a house?

2 Off. That it is.

1 Off. And is not the flesh the house of your soul?

Const. Right.

1 Off. Then attach him
Of burglary for breaking your man's house.

2 Off. No, no, lay flat murder to his charge:
Who knows whether your man may die after it?

Const. Peace! Tell me one thing first; is not every
True subject's blood the king's?

1 Off. Yes, that it is.

Const. And is't not treason to spill the king's blood?

1 Off. Yes, by my faith is't, and high-treason too

Const. Very good: then, my tapster being a true subject,
His blood's the king's, and it is treason to spill't.

1 Off. Oh, well considered, master constable:
This 'tis to have a wise man in the place.

Const. Stand up again, thou monster.

Snip. Bear witness, neighbours,
I am a married man.—Sir, I shall firk[*]
You for't.

Const. I do here attach thee of high-treason
For breaking my tapster's head.

Calve. How? how? treason?

Const. Or any man that dares not justify it.—
Away with him to prison!

Snip. Good master constable,
'Twas wilfully done of me, I must confess;
But did not think 'twas treason. Neighbours, speak for me.

[*] *Sir, I shall firk you for't*] That is, beat you. The word occurs in this sense frequently in these volumes.

Const. Away with him, I say.

Black. Pray, master constable, be good to him:
Of a tailor he's a very honest man; 'tis against
A good time too, and if he should be hanged
For this, he would go near to lose all his custom.

Const.[3] I'll hear no more.

Enter MARCELLIUS, *Soldiers with Drums and Colours.*

Marc. How now? What uproar's this? Are you the constable?

Const. I am the king's sworn image.[4]

Marc. Can you read?

Const. Yes, very well.

Marc. There is his highness' seal
For present levy of a band of men.—
That's the wrong end.

Const. If't be, all's one to me.

Marc. What men are these i' th' house?

Const. A company of quarelling Jacks, an't please you;
They say they have been soldiers, and fall out
About their valours.

Marc. Such as these I look for.

Const. *They have broke my tapster's head amongst 'em captain.*

Marc. *They shall have heads enow to break, ne'er doubt.*—

[3] *Const.*] This speech is part of Blacksnout's in the MS. It evidently belongs to the Constable.

[4] Const. *I am the king's sworn image.*] After this the following words occur in the MS. in another hand, inserted from the preceding speeches, which were omitted in the representation.—"The constable! Tell me of a constable! I know what a constable is; I have been a constable myself."

Bellario, are you here? A man of your known parts,
And quarrel in an ale house?

Bell. Pardon, captain;
'Twas no offence of mine; I lit by chance
Into their company: necessity, you know,—

Marc. Hold thee, here's gold; furnish thyself with speed:
Thou shalt be my lieutenant.

Bell. Thanks, brave captain.

Marc. These shall along with us too. Receive your press.[5]

Calve. Oh, good captain, I have a wife, indeed, sir.

Marc. If she be a striker, I will press her too.

Black. 'Sfoot, I'll go, an't be but to be rid of mine.

Snip. Oh, that I had been hanged out of the way!
Sweet captain!

Marc. Prate not, take it, *you were best.*

Const. *He is my prisoner, captain; I attached him
Of high-treason, for breaking my tapster's head.*

Marc. *Away, you coxcomb!* Bring 'em on, Bellario. [*Exit.*

Const. Pray, gentlemen, will you pay your reckoning then?

Snip. Not a cross,[6] by this hand, and stay me if thou darest.

[5] *Receive your* press.] That is, your press-money, which was paid to the soldiers when impressed for the king's service, and after the receipt of which they were not allowed to absent themselves, without leave, from their companies. Mr Douce derives the word from the French *prest*, ready.

[6] *Not a* cross.] A piece of money stamped with a cross. Touchstone thus quibbles upon the word:—"For my part I had rather bear with you than bear you: yet I should bear no *cross*, if I did bear you; for I think you have no money in your purse."

Black. I'll go to all the wars in the world before I'll pay a doit.

Bell. To wars, my boys! Why, 'tis the bravest life.
I'll sing you a song now shall encourage you,
And make you fight like furies.

All. Oh, let's hear't.

SONG, by BELLARIO.

Hark, oh hark, you valiant soldiers,
How the drum and trumpets sound!
How true valour shall be crown'd[7]
* * * * * *

SCENE III.

An Apartment in the House of Tullius.

Enter PHILADELPHA, *and* LELIA *disguised as* JANUS *her Page.*

Phi. Thy news darts death and horror to my heart:
Think'st thou 'tis true?

Lel. Madam, I wish 'twere false; but, credit me,
It is a general rumour through the city.

[7] This song, according to a frequent practice, is left imperfect in the MS., as the prompter did not find it necessary for his occupation.

Enter Armanus.

Here comes one can resolve you.
Phi. My lord's best friend, best welcome! Oh, Armanus,
Free my sad fears from this same killing sound,
That flies from vulgar mouths; words dipt in gall
Have pierced my quickest sense. Must Tullius leave me?
Arm Pardon me, lady,
If my harsh language shall offend your ears
In seconding what you have caught already:
My friend must leave you; no desire of his,
Purchase of fame or wealth, but the king's will
And country's safety, care of public good,
Which, like the gods' decrees, must be observed.
The Sabines, that have bowed their lowly necks
Thus long beneath Rome's mild and gentle yoke,
Pull their sad fates from our unwilling hands
By base rebellion and foul breach of faith;
And your great lord, for such is the king's love,
Must go as general to correct their pride,
An honour that great princes emulate,[8]
And strive to be preferred to: let that grace,
With thought of his return and high renown
Clear your wet eyes, and make pale fear grow red
To see a woman valiant.
Phi. You have words
Able to comfort a despairing soul:
Yet sure you do but try me; it cannot be,
Nor shall I ever think nature would waste
Such pains and cost to frame a man in whom
She might admire herself, to be a prey

[8] *Emulate.*] i. e. Envy. See above, p. 10.

For cut-throats in his prime.
Arm. No, lady, Heaven defend!
A better angel guards him.
Phi Where is he, good Armanus?
Have we but one poor minute's time to part in,
And shall we lose a sand or thought of that?
Arm. Ere you can wish again, he'll visit you.
'*Phi.* Visit indeed, for I am sick to death
To think of his departure.'
Arm. He is now in conference with young Marius.
Lel. Marius?
Arm. That should have wed his sister, the bright Lelia.
Lel. Hold, my heart! [*Aside.*
Phi. Is he call'd home again?
Arm. And in more grace than ever.
Phi 'Deed, I am glad on't.
Lel. [*Aside.*] My breast's too little to contain my joy;
My tongue will sure betray me.
Arm. Both by this
Are entering the first court.
Phi Look, Janus.—
'*Lel.* *Apart.*] Look? my eye-ball's out.'
Phi. And give me notice ere they enter here,
Lest the wished sight o'ercome me.
'*Lel.* I could stand [*Aside.*
A tedious winter's night on a cold plain
To entertain the object.' Marius, I come. [*Exit.*
Phi. Tell me, Armanus, must the general fight?
Arm. Yes fairest, if the day
Grow dangerous; for when the soldiers' spirits
Grow weak and faint, it heartens up the troops,
And adds a double strength to see him strike.
Phi. Alas, my Tullius never practised it,

Or if he were inured or trained in arms,
He has not the heart, I know, to kill a man:
I never saw him angry.
Arm. 'Tis a sign
He is the better man, more temperate;
For he that knows how to respect a friend
Best knows which way to use an enemy:
Smooth amorists are roughest warriors.
[*A flourish of drums and trumpets, and shouts within.*
Hark, madam, how the general salutes you,
And with what joy the soldiers welcome him!
Who would not leap to hear it?—See, they come.

Enter LELIA, MARCUS TULLIUS, *and* MARIUS.

Lel. My message was before me.
Phi. Oh, dear love! [*They embrace*
Mar. What a true sorrow speaks that mute embrace!
' *Lel.* [*Aside.*] Durst I unclasp the book in which is writ
My heart's affection, thou would'st read it here.
But envious time forbids it.'
M. Tull. Comfort, sweet!
Think not on danger; that is farthest off;
Imagine I accompany the king
In a short progress: 'tis no more, my love,
' Although stern Mars, the cruel god of war,[9]
Ever since that still-remembered time
He lay in Vulcan's gyves a laughing-stake,[1]

[9] *Although stern Mars was the cruel god of war.*] So the MS

[1] *He lay in Vulcan's gyves a* laughing-stake.] This word has since our poets' time, been altered to *laughing-stock.*

Has been to lovers' joys an ireful foe,
And tugs me from these arms to arms of steel,
Envying our soft embraces.'

'*Phi.* I see all earth bred joys are born and dead
In a short moment.' I fare now like her
Was turned from paradise ere she had tasted bliss,
'Or like a king killed at his coronation.'

M. Tull. Weep not, love! 'Oh, spare those orient pearls,
Whose worth out-values all the world beside!
For every drop those crystal spheres let fall,
A crimson flood from their black breast shall run
That thus divorce us. Pr'ythee dry thy tears,
Or I shall traitor prove to honoured arms,
Discovering a wet eye-lid.'

'*Phi.* You shall command what kings want power to do,
My passions.'—Your pardon, noble sir,
[*To* MARIUS.
'This sudden cause of sorrow has bereft
My better faculties of all respect
Fitting so worthy a guest.

'*Mar.* I want power
In all things but the will to render thanks
For my rich welcome; you have feasted me
With what I have most longed for, your fair sight:
Your cates I come not for: your lord and I
Must not look now to feed deliciously.'
I am his servant, lady, in this war,
And will in life and death take part with him.

Lel. [*Apart.*] I am now lost for ever. Wretched Lelia,
What planet reigned at thy nativity
That thus prolongs still thy desired bliss?
Marius to wars? No danger shall detain me,
But step by step I'll still attend on him,
And dally with destruction.

'*Phi.* To part thus!
The all-seeing sun, that makes chaste virgins blush,
But three short nights hath hid his peeping eyes
Since that uniting Hymen tied our hearts'
In a connubial band, yet ne'er allowed
So much true freedom to our infant sports
To make us practic lovers.
M. Tull There's no help, we must part; 'though with less grief
I could attend my father's funeral hearse,'
Than leave thee, in whose each part reigns a world
Of strange attractive pleasure.
Phi. Shall not these breasts for this night be your pillow?
M. Tull. 'Tis my wish, and if with my safety it may be,
Which for thy sake I only strive to keep.

Enter RUFINUS.

Ruf. Hail to the general!
M. Tull. 'Like, my lord, to you.
Arm. [*Aside.*] What makes this screech-owl here?
I never see him, but methinks his face
Is more prodigious [3] than a fiery comet.
Ruf. The king by me, sir, greets you, and commands
You instantly make to the enemy
Before his forces join, and make the way
To victory more difficult. I have done, sir. [*Exit.*

[3] *Prodigious.*] That is, *portentous*, the original sense of the word. So in A Midsummer-Night's Dream:

"Never mole, hare-lip or scar,
Nor mark *prodigious*, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be."

Mar. A strict injunction, more severely uttered.
M. Tull. My Philadelpha sees then there's no stay:
Only a kiss and part: that, though the foe
Were entered Rome, and ready to give fire
To her proud buildings, and my presence solely
Could save the ruin, I would stay to take.—
My love transports me. Pardon, my Armanus,
Pardon my madness: nothing else, thou know'st,
Could make me let thee stand so long neglected.
Farewell, my dearest friend!
Arm. Farewell to whom?——
You wrong me, friend, to think my love so faint
To leave you now; no, though your way were through
Hell's pitchy cave, without a Sybil's clue,
I'd follow you.
Sands shall be numbered first, the heavens stand still,
Earth fly her centre, before death or—
M. Tull. Forbear,
Thou best of men, a true and faithful friend;
Urge not what cannot be: I know thy love
And valour both exceed comparison,
Yet now thou must not go.
Arm. Not go?
M. Tull. No, my prophetic soul
Tells me my absence gives too free a scope
To them that hate me, to supplant my honours:
Besides my own observance I've received
The knowledge of black hatred lodged i' th' breasts
Of our most greatest peers;
Then, lest my danger here at home should prove
More than abroad, stay thou to curb their actions.
Next, here's a virgin in a moment cast
From highest joy to sorrow's lowest valley:
Be thou her comfort, and believe me, friend,

The least of these more, much more, I esteem,
Than if thy manly breast should stand a shield
'Twixt me and thousand perils.

Arm. I am won, sir,
And yield at first charge; may your foes do so!
And Heaven guard me but as I strive to keep
Your honours clear and spotless.

M. Vall. I should sin
In making question of it. Now I'm happy,
But I fear I am over bold with time.—
Dearest, farewell, and think our parting now,
When we meet next, will seal our pleasures high,
And add a new step to felicity. [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter RUFINUS.

Ruf. A general! Oh, ye gods,
Why so disgrace ye a great soldier's name
To cast it on a creature so unworthy?
'I that these twenty years have tugged with danger
Where'er it durst appear, and oft have done
Those deeds would make this novice quake to hear;

I that have stood more breaches for my country[4]
Than e'er he numbered years, while this right hand
From Mars' alluring favourites have forced
Unwilling victory: for all are now
By the ungrateful king slighted, neglected;
While this young puny thing is set a' cock-horse.
Well, king, not fear but wisdom makes me hold
My fury thus long from thee: but, my general,
Ward yourself well, or my revengeful ire,
'Like a resistless storm, sent from the north,
Shall blast your springing glory in the bud.
The deadly shirt dipt in the centaur's gore,
Thou fool, thou might'st have put on with less
danger
Than clothe thee thus in these unfitting honours
Which fate ordained for me: I hate thee firmly,
And hate deep-rooted in a soldier's breast
Can hardly be digged out.'—Oh, his grace comes,
And I must clear my brow; for anger seen
Loses his force, kept secret strengthens spleen.[5]

Enter LEARCHUS, LEONTIUS, MARCELLANUS, *and another Senator; then* TITUS MARTIUS, *talking to* ARMANUS.

Titus. Armanus, we have sent thy friend to
danger,
But Honour leads him on. We ever saw

[4] *I that have* stood *more breaches for my country.*] This is sense, as it may mean, stood in, held out, or defended breaches; but I much suspect we should read *stormed.*

[5] *Speene.*] So the MS. *Spleen* in this place signifies angry humour. So in The Taming of the Shrew:

——"I must forsooth be forced
To give my hand, opposed unto my heart,
Unto a mad-brain rudesby full of *spleen.*"

Some dawning virtue in his generous look,
Which now, we hope, in action will shine clear,
And dazzle Envy's eyes.—Pray speak, lords, freely,
How like you our election of a general?

Sen. As if the gods themselves had made the choice.

Ruf. [*Aside.*] Yes, 'mongst schoolboys to lead a feasting on.

Titus. Your approbation pleases, and, we trust,
He'll bring home peace and victory together;
Therefore the fear[6] of ill success be far:
On his high altar, to Tarpeian Jove,
A milk-white bull with gilded horns we'll offer
To favour Rome, and be propitious to him.
Let all our temple-gates be opened wide,
And daily orisons to all the gods
Be made, to send him home a happy victor.

Ruf. [*Aside.*] The king's grown wond'rous holy o' the sudden.

Titus. Ourself in private here, low on our knees,
Will pour our prayers for his tender safety.
Then leave us, lords, and see our will performed
Religiously.—Nay, you may stay, Rufinus.

[*Exeunt all but* TITUS MARTIUS *and* RUFINUS.

Ruf. [*Aside.*] What's the king's meaning? To make me his priest?
Why, I yet never knew which way to pray;
Or, if my nurse e'er taught me such a language,
I left it in my cradle.—Here's a cushion.
Pleaseth your grace to kneel?

Titus. To kneel? To whom?[7]
'Dost not thou think the gods would blush to see

[6] *There ... feare.*] The intermediate words are supplied in a later hand.

[7] *We are not disposed to pray.*] These words are added in another hand, on account of the nine subsequent lines being omitted at the representation.

A man, in greatness equalling themselves,
Debase himself so poorly? Know, Rufinus,
If Jove be able to do us a kindness,
Our merits bind him to it. The garlands, crowns,
High altars, sacrifices, stately temples
Our bounty has bestowed upon him, yet
Are unrewarded all: then, without pride,
We scorn to be a beggar to our debtor.'

Ruf. Then I mistook you, sir.

Titus. And so thou dost
In more than this, Rufinus. Pr'ythee, tell me,
What's thy conceit of Tullius and his honours?

Ruf. May I speak freely, sire?

Titus. And fearless too,
As if thou wert my oracle or priest:
Though all thy words be pointed, and black treason
Hung upon every harsh-tuned syllable
Of what thou now shalt utter, by my crown
My love shall be as firm to thee as now.

Ruf. Then, sir, for Tullius, he's a white-cheeked boy,
Whose fearful soul a soldier's frown would fright
From his fine mettled breast; he has a face
That would disgrace a wound. Had you viewed him
As he went drooping through the city-gates,
You might have seen his heart there charactered:
He looked as if with joy he could have changed
His march for a soft measure,[8] his loud drum
For a still quavering lute,
His waving colours for a lady's scarf,
And his stiff armour for a masquing suit;
Nor can I think your eyes, sir, were so blinded
But you saw many more able, more deserving men,

[8] *A soft* measure.] A solemn stately dance, similar to a minuet.

Whose virtues might have claimed what you have
cast
On him, without desert: amongst which number,
Since you're pleased to forget it, I may name
Myself without the title of vain-glorious;
And boast this hand has pulled contiguous death[9]
Even from that breast of yours, and quenched
those fires
That would have turned your palace into cinders.
In three set battles 'gainst the manly Gauls,
Which were the first since godlike Hercules
That ever climbed the Alpine hills, with force
This sword hath won you glory: but henceforth
I'll learn to rest at home, secured from danger;
Your wives shall be deflow'red, your children's
brains
Strew the cold pavement, all the channels run
With crimson rivers, and your tottering crown
Drop from your head ere I will strike a stroke,
Or stir a foot for any so unthankful.

Titus. How, traitor?

Ruf. Never storm; you have given free speech,
And I'll be bold to use it. As for Tullius,
Let him be sure my justly stirred-up wrath
Shall never die, till smothered[1] in his ashes;
And do not think but he that dares speak this
Unto his angry king, dare see it done,
Nay act it; the like Learchus and Leontius,
And divers valiant spirits, have resolved,
And do not fear to speak it. Then judge you
What hope your general has e'er to return,
Or if return, how long to enjoy his honours.
Now, sir, you know our minds.

[9] *And boast this hand has pulled death.*] This lacuna is filled up in the MS. by a later hand, in an almost illegible manner.

[1] *Smother.*] MS.

Titus. Yes, sir, we do,
And you shall all feel ours. Poor envious fools,
Whose shallow judgments could [not] search our reach
In sending Tullius hence. I knew your hate,
Your puffed ambition and your poisonous spleens
Darting at Marcus' graces, which, like motes,
But darken the bright beams of his clear virtues:
Your honours make you odious; grace bestowed
On those that shall corrupt it, blacker shows,
And does present the persons baser far
Than such as spring from dunghills. You have now
By this device thrown that into our bosom
We would have purchased with a magazine.
Ruf. Your poor partaking it;[2] for since I see
Revenge sit on your forehead, we know now
How to prevent your fury. Fare you well, sir.
Titus. Stay.
Ruf. Not to hear one word more.
Titus. We do entreat thee stay.
Ruf. Well, what's your will?
Titus. That thou shouldst look more mildly, banish doubt,
For we so prize thee and thy high deserts,
We'll take away the cloud that hides the truth
From thy deluded eyes; therefore prepare
To hear a story shall astonish thee.
Thou canst be secret?
Ruf. Yes, I think I can.
Titus. Then know, these furrows cast up in our brow

[2] *Your poor partaking it.*] A line, or two hemistichs, seem to be wanting before or after these words, in which Rufinus ridicules the king for partaking or communicating his suspicions to himself.

Was but to cover seed that has ta'en root
In this our dry-parched brain: We are in love
With beauteous Philadelpha.
Ruf. What's that to me?
Titus. Be patient, thou shalt hear: I dote on her
More than the fool on folly, wise on knowledge,
The usurer on his gold, or proud of honour.
It was her love that advanced Tullius
Unto this type of state;
Her beauty only made him general,
And thrust him hence into the jaws of danger,
Which his debilities will leap into.[3]
For whilst he stayed at home, what hope had I,
Or any[4] opportunity, to gain
The richest prize that ever sweetened sin?
My love to thee is firm as e'er it was,
But lust so sure has marked me for her own
That I neglect all things that tend not solely
To the attainment of my wished delight.
Ruf. 'Faith, sir, in my mind,
An easier battery might win such a fort.
Titus. I know not, for I yet ne'er found the man
I could think worthy [of] the embassy
To bear the message of my heart to her;
But thou, Rufinus, through the court art famed
For thy neat 'suasive speech and candied tongue,
With which from fixed resolutions oft
Thou hast removed ourself, and made us wonder
At our own weakness, seeking to conclude
Matters of weight without thee. 'Tis my wish—
Ruf. That I should be your spokesman.

[3] *Which his* rash judgment soon *will leap into.*] Altered thus in the MS. in a later hand.

[4] *Of* my.] So the MS.

Titus. Before any.
Ruf. A fair preferment! Thus, whilst Tullius wins
Honour abroad, styled your great general,
I must be kept at home to be your pandar?
You are ignoble to propose a deed
Of so much baseness to a soldier:
Had I no other name to honour me?
I'll sooner fly unto your enemy,
And with my sword compel this princock boy
To bring her to your arms, nay, to your bed,
And make him there be bawd to his own wife,
Than undergo the title pandar: 'Sdeath!
Titus. Stop not at that; 'tis far from our intent.
Ruf. Yet since 'tis Tullius must be cuckolded,
I well could brook that name, or any worse,
To fix my vengeance on him. Hear me, sir:
Armanus, his great friend, is made the guardian
To watch this golden fruit; 'twixt him and me
Long time has festered an old enmity;
Remove but him, or work him to your wish,
'Twill be the better: none can sooner stir
Affection in the wife, than he that's most
Familiar with the husband, nor can move
More freely and suspectless. The ice broke,
I'll second him, and plunge into a sea
Of lovers' passion, promise of such grace,
Your godlike virtues, care of her chaste name,
Command of sovereignty, the world's chief bliss
And women's sole desire; then, sir——
Titus. No more,
Pry thee no more: thou shalt not waste such words,
Whose eloquence would force a frozen nun
To fly her holy orisons to embrace me.
I build upon't she's mine. About it then;
I am yet a bondman, thou must set me free,

Or I shall range beyond community.[5]
About it, dear Rufinus!— [*Exit* RUFINUS.
Thus must kings,
For private ends, the insolence endure
Of those were born their vassals, and immure
Their high disdain, that, like a storm should drown
Their full-sailed pride, and headlong strike it down.[6]
But who is't can prevent it? Chance or fate,
What we intend wants power or wit to mate.[7]
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Room in the House of Tullius.

Enter PHILADELPHIA, *in a Mourning Habit, and* FLAVIA.

Phi. Is not Armarius yet returned from court?
Fla. Returned? No, madam, but I wonder at

[5] —— *thou must set me free,*
Or I shall range beyond community.] The last word is here used with a sense of which I do not remember any other example; apparently for the duties incumbent on society.

[6] —— *and homewards strike it down.*] Altered in the MS. by a later hand to *headlong.*

[7] —— *Chance or fate,*
What we intend wants power or wit to mate.] The last word seems to be used in the sense of, to hinder or confound. With the last of these meanings, it occurs in the Comedy of Errors:
"I think you are all *mated*, or stark mad."

it; being a merchant venturer as he is, and there such excellent trading methinks, ere this he might have made return by tale or wholesale.[8]

Phi. I pr'ythee, Flavia, cease. Why art thou still
So jocund when I'm sad?

Fla. 'Faith, lady, to try if the company of mirth can drive away this unwelcome melancholy: 'tis a scurvy guest, and still disturbs you.

Phi. 'Tis a kind friend that still associates me;
My Tullius, when he parted, left us two
To keep his house, and there's no other lord
Shall bear rule here till he himself take place.

Fla. Worse luck, say I! Oh, fie upon't! This marriage spoils us all; when you were a maid—

Phi. A maid, Flavia!

Fla. I mean uncoupled, madam: you are a maid now but for necessity, against your will: Love knows that's a hard case. How often have I heard [you] after you had spent a whole day in discourse with some dry-brained suitor, at night laugh at him in your sleep.

Phi. Thou art a mad wench. 'Faith, tell me, Flavia,
Since we are entered thus in fond discourse,[9]
How many suitors hast thou?

Fla. Let me see; tag and rag, 'think some four and twenty, as many as would make up a grand

[8] *He might have made return by* tale *or wholesale.*] *Tale* seems to be here used for *retail.* If this is not allowed we must read *sale.*

[9] *In* fond *discourse.*] *Fond* is here used in the old sense of foolish. So in Marlow's Jew of Malta:

—— "My girl, think me not all so *fond*
As negligently to forego so much
Without provision for thyself and me."

jury: but if I were in question for my life, I'd be prest ere I'd be tried by 'em, they have been so often forsworn.

Phi. Lord, wench, what dost thou do with them all?

Fla. Do with 'em all? Venus forbid it, madam! I keep 'em at a further distance; by my faith, he's a happy man that once in a moon gets a touch of my lips. Yet there was a saucy mercer t'other day thrust in upon me with his yard in his hand, and ere I was aware made shift to feel what stuff my petticoat was made of: but I think I gave him a cooling card.[1] I taught him what it was for a citizen to meddle with a waiting gentlewoman; I made him stand at bay like a chased stag.

Phi. Are you so good a huntswoman? 'Tis well. But which of all the number dost thou love? Which is the man like to go through with thee?

Fla. 'Faith, madam, there is one that's like to go as far as a man can do with a woman.

Phi. Thou art knavish still: What is he, Harebrain?

Fla. He is styled the right worshipful Sir Pergamus; a gallant of some six hundred a-year, but no more wit than I wish my husband should have. He was here yesterday to show his clothes; a new suit some two hundred years behind the fashion; compliment correspondent: at first encounter he scraped me a leg that set my teeth on edge, and then entered into an amorous discourse of the troublesome adventures in love betwixt him and

[1] *I gave him a* cooling-card.] The meaning of this phrase is obvious. It frequently occurs in old plays. So in Marmion's Antiquary: "Are you so hot? I shall give you a *card to cool* you." The phrase originated probably from card-playing, when the exultation of one of the parties is cooled by his being over-trumped.

one of his mother's milk-maids, interlarded with strong sighs that would have turned a windmill, able to move a sick horse to compassion. He goes waddling up and down the streets as if he were driving a flock of geese before him, (but six hundred pounds a-year drowns greater faults than these) about the city. He promised to see me again to-day. [*Knocking within.*]
Somebody knocks; if it be he,
Expect to hear a perfect comedy. [*Exit.*

Phi. This wench is honest, only strains this mirth
To qualify my sorrow.—

Re-enter FLAVIA.

Now, who is't?

Fla. The worthy wight I spoke of: Good, sweet madam,
Do but vouchsafe a welcome.

Phi. Bring him in.

Enter Sir PERGAMUS, *in an old Armour, a Capon's Tail in his Beaver, a long Sword; and* DINDIMUS, *his Dwarf, carrying his Lance and Shield.*

Bless me! what pageant's this?

Per. Now, Flavia, behold thy Pergamus,
In arms complete, for thy sweet sake addressed,[2]
With lance and shield likewise, and in my crest
The favour thou bestow'dst on me last day,
Whose very shaking shall the man dismay[3]

[2] *Addressed.*] i. e. ready, prepared. So in the Second Part of Henry IV.—

"Our navy is *addressed*, our power collected."

[3] *Destroy.*] Altered in the MS. to *dismay*.

Dares stand the force of my unvanquished arm.

Dind. I'll swear unvanquished, [it] was never tried yet.

Fla. Alas! what means my love? You affright me;
Are these fit tools to come a-wooing with?

Dind. I ne'er knew a woman find fault with a long tool before.

Per. No talk of wooing now: thy beauteous sight
Must blazoned be before thy warlike knight
Will touch thy tender skin.

Fla. A poet too?

Per. 'Faith, some such idle vein infects my muse;
It comes to me by natural instinct,
I can scarce talk but in such foolish verse.

Fla. I think no less.

Phi. It is a sign you have
A pregnant wit, Sir Pergamus.

Per. Am I o'erheard?
A rival? Then—— [*Seizes the lance.*

Fla. Oh, hold! What will you do?
It is my lady come to welcome you.

Per. Oh, is it so? Then rest, my Rosiclear,
That ne'er was drawn, but it killed somebody.
Fairest![4]

Phi. Excellent! Go on, I long to hear you talk.

Dind. Ay, but his set speech is at an end; he's spoke all that he studied.

Per. Lady, you must not look for compliment,
It is absurd in soldiers, but——

Phi. At a stop?

[4] Dind. *When any man was near.*] Added in another hand. Rosiclear in the preceding line, the appellation given to his sword, is the name of one of the heroes in The Mirror of Knighthood.

Per. At such a butt, fair lady, give me leave
To draw my prickshaft home.

Fla. He hit now indeed: nay, madam, I told you what a suitor I had of him.

Phi. Is that your dwarf, Sir Pergamus?

Per. This is my page.

Dind. The Squire of low Degree,[5]
That does attend upon this errant knight.

Per. All this is little to the purpose, madam;
I come prepared, you see, with utmost speed
To march with your brave general to the wars.
I would be sorry but to be the first
And foremost in the rank, next to himself.

Phi. Your haste deserves it, trust me; but my lord
Is there by this time——

Per. How?—Come, Dindimus.

Phi. And coming back, I hope, with victory.

Per. And I not there? It is impossible.
Post, Dindimus, fetch me my swiftest horse
And one that can run best.

Dind. Your curtaled jennet?[6]

Per. Whip, I say, begone!
I would not for a hundred Roman dollars,
But be the first that should come home again
To tell the story of our chivalry.

Dind. One honour's enough for me when I am there once.[7] [*Exit.*

[5] *The Squire of low Degree.*] An allusion to a very popular metrical romance, reprinted by Ritson.

[6] *Your curtaled Gime.*] The speaker's name is inserted in the original hand-writing, but the speech added in the later hand. *Gime* must either be the name of the horse, or, what is more likely, an absurd corruption of *jennet*.

[7] *One honour's enough for me when I am there once.*] This line,

Fla. But will my dearest leave me?

Per. Will I? Oh, hold me not, this sword shall write
A chronicle of thee; Hector of Troy
Amongst the Trojans ne'er made such annoy.

Fla. Amongst the Greeks you mean.

Per. All's one to me,
Some thing he did; but, Flavia, thou shalt see
Sir Pergamus of Rome will him excel.
If thou ne'er seest me more, then say——

Enter ARMANUS.

Arm. How now, who's this?

Phi. Armanus, is it you?

Arm. Madam, I desire
Some private conference. Pray discharge your woman.

Phi. She may be gone: Were't in a wilderness,
I'd trust myself with your known virtues.

Fla. Come, Sir Pergamus, till your horse come, you and I'll go play at shuttle-cock.

Per. A match, i'faith; I love that sport a' life.[8] Yet my mother charged me not to use it for fear of putting my arm out of joint.

[*Exit with* FLAVIA.

Arm. Lady, I come to be a suitor to you.

Phi. Whate'er it be lies in my power to grant,
That love which shines on Tullius sues my tongue
To say you must not want it.

the meaning of which is not very obvious, should probably be given to Dindimus.

[8] *I love that sport* a' life.] This is a common phrase in old plays, and probably an abbreviation of *at life*, as Tyrwhitt conjectures.

Arm. Quickly you yield; but look that like rash Phœbus
After his promise to his hair-brained son,
Or like Heaven's monarch after his sad vow
To his loved Semele, you repent not
Of what you grant so freely: The first, this. [*Kisses her.*

Phi. My promise is performed,
And you enjoy't: But if aught else you crave,
Your counsel makes me wise to ask what 'tis
Ere I engage me further.

Arm. Fairest, know
I come to sue for love.

Phi. And can you doubt, sir, but you have it amply?

Arm. I mean such love as Tullius shall enjoy
When he lies panting in these ivory arms;
Such love as Venus calls for, that which swims
In highest pleasure, such as cynic fools
Style lust and wantonness,[9] but wiser men
The world's Elysium.

Phi. Defend me! What strange sounds
Beat at my ears for entrance, or what fiend
Assumes the habit of my lord's best friend
To wrong his goodness and my chastity?
This cannot be Armanus?

Arm. Why, dear madam?
Because I speak the heart of him that lies
A captive at your mercy, bound and chained
By your enchanting beauty, in your breath
The life of all his joys? Oh, let the doom
Be mild and gentle then as is the air
You draw: one kind embrace raises us up
To Heaven; only this.

Phi. All faith in men farewell!

[9] *Wantons.*] So the MS.

Do you not blush to make me blush to hear
Your unchaste speeches? is your heart so foul
As your false tongue would make it? Good, my
lord,
What light collections has your searching eye
Caught from my loose behaviour?[1] what wild
looks,
Immodest gestures, wanton dalliance,
Since my dearest Tullius' absence ever dwelt
Or dimpled this with laughter, that you dare
Essay to tempt me to impurity?
Suppose I were as wicked as you wish me,
Or did exceed Pasiphae[2] in her lust,
Can you imagine I would trust my truth,
Or virgin honour, or the unspotted white
Which Tullius ne'er unclasped yet, with a man
That proves so faithless to so good a friend?

Arm. Sure you mistake me.

Phi. The gods grant I do.

Arm. There's no lust reigns in me.

Phi. Oh, pardon, sir, [*Kneels.*
Pardon my misconceit and harsh reply,
And I'll attend you ever.

Arm. Your bent knee [*Kneels.*
Is my instruction's badge, and thus low
Once more I urge the acceptance of that suit

[1] *What light* collections *has your searching eye*
Caught from my loose behaviour?] *Collections* means inferences deduced from premises. The word is used in the same manner in Cymbeline:

——— "When I waked I found
This label on my bosom; whose containing
Is so from sense in hardness, that I can
Make no *collection* of it; let him show
His skill in the construction."

[2] *A Luis.*] Thus altered in the MS. The word *trust* in the next line was omitted in the MS., and supplied in the later hand-writing.

You so abhor to hear;
But for another.
Phi. This is worse, more hateful:
Love, that enforced the gods themselves to err,
Might in yourself have made it pardonable,
But for another! Nothing can be baser.
Arm. The man but known, the name of baseness fades:
'Tis for the king, whose awful dread command
Must be obeyed before our own desires.
Phi. He must command then just and worthy things,
Else 'tis more noble to deny his will.
Arm. He may compel, you know, what he entreats.
Phi. Yes, such as 'bove their honours prize their lives,
Not her[3] that chooses virtue for her guide.
You greater powers, guard me from violence,
And from a wilful fall I'll keep myself.
High Jupiter, the 'venger of foul sin,
With angry thunder strike me to the deepest
And darkest shades of hell, when I consent
To 'file my unstained faith!
Arm. Heaven hear thy vows, and turn
Those plagues on me when I shall tempt thee further!
Rise the world's wonder, a pure virgin-wife!
Sweet angel, fly me not, for what I spake
Was only to confirm my sacred thoughts
Of thy religious virtue. Yet those sparkling eyes
Have kindled raging flames in the king's breast,
And I was wooed, and seemingly was won,
To aid Rufinus in the overthrow
Of thy unvanquished goodness.

[3] *Not she.*] So the MS.

Phi. I am now safe and shelter'd with a rock.
Tullius, thou'rt happy above happiness,
Blest with so true a friend.—

Enter Flavia.

In haste? Thy news.
Fla. The lord Rufinus, madam, all alone
Is enter'd[4] the house, and craves some speech with you.
Phi. What shall I do, Armanus?
Arm With all love, seem to afford a welcome;
Give him free audience. In some place unseen
I'll overhear your conference, that when time
Calls to account these injuries I may stand
A witness 'gainst their falsehoods. [*Stands aside.*
'*Phi.* Bring him in.' [*Exit* Flavia.

Enter Rufinus.

Ruf.[5] All health and happiness.
Phi. If your fair words
And wishes parallel your lordship's welcome.
Ruf. No words can parallel my wishes, madam;
The happiness I bring you wants a name;
'Tis more ineffable than are the joys
Of love or paradise.
Phi. You astonish me.
Ruf. Be not perverse, fair miracle of nature!
The queen of heaven shall emulate thy state;
Princes shall throng to kiss these hands, and kings

[4] *'S entred.*] MS.

[5] *Ruf.*] The rest of this scene, excepting the three last speeches, has a line drawn along the margin, and then *stet* is written in a more modern hand. It was, no doubt, intended for omission, and then restored at a subsequent representation.

Shall be thy tenants but at will.
Arm. [*Aside.*] Smooth villain!
Ruf. The world shall be thy dowry, and all men
Shall study how to please and honour thee!
All this and more is thine, do but consent
To entertain a bliss exceeds the rest.
Phi. 'Tis a hard thing a woman can deny
On these conditions.
Ruf. 'Tis what all women court to embrace,
Or else most writers err. If to enjoy
A man excels his sex as you do yours—
When he was young (and yet he is not old)
His face disgraced Adonis; or the boy
The thunder bearer stole from mourning Troy;
And since virility upon his chin
Hath [planted] golden hairs,[6] blind Cupid sits
Weaving his nets of them to catch coy virgins.
Phi. Is he a properer man than Tullius?
Ruf. Compare the crow to the unspotted swan!
Æsop to Hyacinth!
Phi. What pity 'tis
So sweet a man was born without a name!
Ruf. Nay, certainly
He has a name, bright beauty, and the best:
'Tis Titus Martius, my dread sovereign,
Whose royal love in this, as in his heart,
Is fixed with deep[7] impression.
Phi. My sad thoughts
Told me some poisonous snake was closely hid
Under your flourishing words.
Ruf. Can you deny a lover's smile to him
That lays a crown beneath your conquering feet?

[6] *Hath golden hairs.*] It is obvious that the word in brackets, or one similar to it, was dropped in the MS.

[7] *Deepest.*] So the MS.

Phi. Unheard-of cruelty! Dare such black thoughts
Enter the bosom of a true-born prince,
Where clearest streams should run? By his own choice
And free election I was made the spouse
Of noble Tullius; with his royal hand
In the holy temple given to my lord;
And does he seek in the uniting spring
To reap the harvest of unripened joys,
And pluck that fruit the owner never tasted?
Was it for this my Marcus was removed
From safety's valley, where content sits crowned,
To tread upon the slippery steps of state
Where pride and envy strive to throw him down,
And folly and disdain deriding him?
Was't not enough to mock his youth with hopes
Of a feigned happiness, then send him forth
To stand the battery of rebellious arms
That would deface his country, and raze down
This city and his palace; but meanwhile
Seek to make spoil of his chief treasury,
And rob this storehouse by adulterous theft,
Where all his joys are hoarded? Poor young man,
Poor in thy riches, lessened being made great!
For when with honour's loss we honour gain,
'Tis an ill-thriving purchase; they that win
Are the most losers;[8] I'll not hazard mine.
Ruf. You are too hard a gamester; for all know
Honour attends the favour of a king.
Phi. Would you then urge me to infringe my oath,

[8] —— *They that win*
Are the most *losers.*] That is, the greatest losers. So in Henry VI., Part I.—

—— "Always resolute in *most* extremes."

And violate the sacred vow I made
Before the gods and men, to Tullius?
Ruf. That's an excuse easily dispensed withal:
A lover's vows the gods ne'er hearken after,
But in the air they die. Madam, be wise;
If you refuse these graces you may pull
Perils on him you seem to tender so,
And danger your own safety.[9] Kings' requests
Must not be dallied with, chiefly in love;
For what they least enjoy they covet most,
And are unbounded in't. Bethink yourself,
And bless me with your answer; I'll attend it.
Phi. You have left my sense in a strange wilderness,
Searching a thousand ways to find reply.
So great a lover, such an orator,
Might make Diana stagger in her choice;
Then blame not my weak fancy: but to yield
At first encounter may befit the state
Of some suburbane strumpet,[1] but not her
A king shall crown with his affection.
I crave but ten short days to give resolve
To this important suit,[2] in which consists

[9] danger *your own safety.*] i. e. endanger; a very uncommon use of the word.

[1] —— *some* suburbane *strumpet.*] In former times courtezans chiefly inhabited the outskirts of the towns, and many allusions to this custom occur in these plays.

[2] *I crave but ten short days to give* resolve
To this important *suit.*] *Resolve* means here *answer*, and *important* is used in its ancient sense of *importunate*. So in the Honest Man's Fortune:—

"I have known you wear a suit full worth a lordship;
Give to a man whose need ne'er frighted you
From calling of him friend, five hundred crowns,
Ere sleep had left your senses to consider
Your own *important* present uses."

My endless shame, or lasting happiness;
Till when my senseless ears shall be stopt up
'Gainst all enticements: Urge no more, 'tis vain.
Ruf. If you command, lady, I must obey,
Since what you will no prince dares contradict.
[*Exit.*
Arm. [*Coming forward.*] A cunning slave and smooth-tongued flatterer!
Phi. For fear a strict denial might have wrought
Some stratagem against my Tullius' life,
Thus long I have heard hell's messenger,
And with a liberal tongue and feigned words,
Have outstripp'd modesty; but Heaven can tell
How far 'twas from my heart.[3]
Arm. Best of thy sex, I know't, and with my life
Will still assist 'gainst all temptations.
Phi. May my lord live to thank you!
Arm. 'Tis a wish
Beyond which all the world wants recompence.
[*Exeunt.*

[3] *For fear a strict denial* st - - - may wreak
Some stratagem against my Tullius' life,
With patience I will hear *hell's messenger,*
And with a liberal tongue and feigned words
Seem to accept of his ill motion,
But Heaven can tell how far 'tis from my heart.] Thus these lines are altered in the MS., in consequence of the scene between Rufinus and Philadelpha being marked for omission. One word in the first line is illegible.

SCENE III.

Before the Walls of the Sabine Capital.

Enter, with Drums and Colours, MARCUS TULLIUS, MARIUS, MARCELLUS, BELLARIO, BLACKSNOUT, SNIPSNAP, CALVESKIN, LELIA *disguised as* JANUS, *and Soldiers.*

M. Tull. Thus far our troops have marched auspiciously,
And, like to wildfire, turned to nothing all
That durst resist them. Sure some greater power
Which favours Rome, and is above the strength
Of any mortal arms, fights on our side.
Our foes are fled into their walls again,
And dare not stand the encounter.
Mar. 'Tis most strange;
Thrice have they issued forth, and braved our force,
Couching their lances, reining up their steeds
As if we should have met like thunder claps,
And then turned head and took their holds again:
Either it is some cunning stratagem
To train us to our ruin, or some one
Within our host,[4] *protected, Jason-like,*

[4] ——— *Or some* strange power
Remains *within our host,*
Whose blessed fate, &c.] Thus these lines are altered in the MS. in another hand-writing. The text is not very plain, and the word *Jason* has only been inserted by guess, as it is almost illegible

Mars dares not cope withal, whose blessed fate
Makes all our army happy.
Lel. [*Aside.*] If the prayers
Of a pure virgin e'er could move the gods
To be compassionate, and end in peace
These threatening summons, for thy safety, Marius,
And my dear brother's, Lelia will ne'er cease
Her invocations[5] to those potent powers
That yet in all your actions guarded ye.
[*A Parley sounded on the Walls.*
Marc. Hark, my lord, again they summon us.
M. Tull. Answer once more that sound: Bring up our troops.
We'll offer parley to them, and propose
Rough war, or peace, such articles observed
As we before provided.
[*The Parley answered below.*

Enter on the Walls, SABINUS *and others.*

Marc. They appear.
M. Tull. Sabinus, we are come to give thee peace,
If upon fair conditions thou'lt receive it:
Surrender up again those forts and towns
Which with rebellious arms thou hast divorced
From Rome and us, [and] Titus pardons all
Thy bold attempts, nor shall the life or goods
Of thee, or any thy assistants, feel

in the MS. The meaning of the passage seems to be: "The reason why the enemies retreat, is either because they intend some cunning stratagem to train us to our ruin, or because there is in our host some one who makes all our army happy, or contributes to render us so terrible to them, that they dare not attack us, being protected by the gods in such a manner that Mars dare not cope with him."

[5] *Imprecations.*] Altered in a later hand.

The wreak of his just anger.[6] Be not rash,
But answer with advice, for if our swords
But once more see the sun's reflected beams,
Ruin and death attends them.
Sab. Proudly spoke,
And like a Roman: but, young general, know
No threatening can affright us. When first of all
With war and fury you o'er-run our country,
What cause could you pretend for so foul wrong,
But only, we were weak, and you in arms
Potent and practic: since which time we have borne
Your insolencies and oppressions
With a dull leaden patience; but now
Are wearied with your slavish tyranny,
And cannot longer suffer it. You may chance
By your great odds to win our towns again,
But you must find new people to inhabit 'em;
For there's not one amongst us that draws breath
Able to lift a sword or steel, whose point
Can pierce a Roman's breast, but is resolved
To embrace pale death in his most horrid shape,
Ere live a captive to so proud a foe.
Mar. Against necessity who is't can stand?
Therefore consider and submit yourselves;
It may regain your former liberty.
Sab. A seeming liberty is worse than thrall.
We scorn such clemency.
M. Tull. Pervert not truth:
Yet ask for mercy, and it may be granted.
Sab. We hate to beg it, Tullius. Though your power
You think resistless, ere to-morrow's noon
These hands shall force it from thee.

[6] *The* wreak *of his just anger.*] That is, the vengeance his just anger is ready to inflict.

M. Tull. Cease to boast.—
'Twas answered like a soldier.
Sab.[7] When we meet,
Our swords shall prove as much.
[*Exit with his Soldiers.*
Calve. Oh, now, now, Snipsnap!
Snip. We are all dead men.
M. Tull. Well, gentlemen, you see
What a stiff foe we have to deal withal:
But be not daunted, for our strengths compared
Were to match Hercules with . . . .[8]
Let your arms be in readiness, and strong watch
This night in every quarter. Come, Marius,
We'll take our tent again; methinks I feel
The bleak and moist rawness of the vaporous air
To be malignant to me. How cheers Janus?
Mar. Do not the humorous elements offend
Thy tenderness? How fares my pretty page?
Lel. As one whose life were governed by those stars
Shined at your happy births: There is no ill
Can craze my health that not assails yours first.
M. Tull. Loving boy, thy goodness sure protects us.
[*Exeunt* MARCUS TULLIUS, MARIUS, LELIA, *and* MARCELLUS.
Bell. How now, my fresh-water soldiers? How is't?
We are like to have hot doings.

[7] *Sab.*] This speech is unappropriated in the MS. It evidently belongs to Sabinus.

[8] *Were to match Hercules with . . . .*] So the original MS. The last word is supplied by another hand, but so illegibly, and so much obliterated by the line being crossed, that it is impossible to decypher it.

Black. We are indeed;
It puts me into a cold sweat to think on't.
Snip. 'Would my mother's cat
Had killed me in my cradle!
Black. Or my wife, whose nails are sharper,
Scratched out my eyes I might not see my death.
Bell. Tut, man, courage!
Let's fight it valiantly, and never fear.
Snip. Truly, lieutenant, I dare not fight.
Bell. Not fight, man! Why?
Snip. Because there was an old woman once
Told me, if ever I fought I should be killed.
Calve. She told us all three so, indeed, lieutenant.
Bell. Hang her, damned witch! Can there be a braver death
Than to die for our country?
Snip. Bravery call you it?
'Tis an invisible bravery, a man's ne'er seen
To wear it. Lieutenant, here's all the money I have:
Speak a good word to the general I may go home again,
You may say I'm troubled with a catching disease
That will infect the army.
Black. Or, do you hear,
Tell him we are not our own men; when we
Came forth, 'twas only drink that made us valiant;
And, unless he'll be at the charge to keep us drunk
As long as the wars last, we shall be able
To do him no service at all.
Bell. You shall not want for drink, boys, take my word.
Pox on't! 'Tis base to return; you shall have every rogue
And tattered tinker kick you, spit at you,
And every wench in Rome, as ye pass by, fling dirt at you,

Saying, "There are the soldiers durst not draw their blades."

Snip. But they shall find we dare, and strike home too.
I am now resolved, and will be valiant;
This bodkin quilts their skins as full of holes
As e'er was canvas doublet.[9]

Bell. Spoke like a man, bold Snip.

Black. These words have fired me too,
And, though their skull-caps be of anvil-proof,
This blade shall hammer some of 'em.

Calve. [*Draws.*] Then come forth,
Thou Durindan so bright.[1]

Bell. Why, how now? Mad, Orlando?

Calve. I am mad,
My hair, like bristles, raise their forked ends
Against these Sabines; I shall leather 'em.

Black. Well said, my tough Calveskin. One health now,
Here at the sutler's, to our victory;
Then each man to his quarter.

Snip. Done, i'faith.

Bell. 'Give us' some liquor here.

Enter Sutler.

Sut. You shall, gentlemen, instantly.
How much will't please you have?

Bell. Each man his double measure.

[9] *This* bodkin *quilts their skins as full of holes
As e'er was canvas doublet.*] The tailor quibbles upon the usual sense of bodkin, and that which it also bore at the time, *viz.* a small dagger. So in Lilly's Sappho and Phaon: "There will be a desperate fray between two, made at all weapons, from the brown bill to the *bodkin.*"—Doublets were worked in eyelet holes, or pounced, according to the technical phrase at the time.

[1] *Durindan.*] The sword of Orlando.

Sut. In a trice. [*Exit.*

Bell. Shall's have a catch, my hearts?

Calve. Ay, good lieutenant.

Black. Methinks a soldier should sing nothing else;
Catch that catch may is all our life, you know.

Bell. Blacksnout's conceited too.[3]

Re-enter Sutler with Drink.

Sut. Here, gentlemen.

Bell. Come on then, boys, and each man bear a part. [*A Song; then exeunt.*[4]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Rome. An Apartment in the Palace.

Enter TITUS MARTIUS *and* RUFINUS.

Titus. Away, injurious man!
Tysiphone must learn to imitate

[3] *Blacksnout's* conceited *too.*] Conceit was used at the time for a pleasant thought, a clinch of wit.

[4] Lower down on the page we have these words crossed out in the MS. "The God a mercy, Lieutenant." Whether they refer to the song or not cannot now be ascertained.

Those baleful tortures thou hast put me to
With thy protraction: A willing suitor
Might well ere this have tempted, wooed, and won,
And seen the longing fruit of hot desire
With blushes call him father, while thou'rt fumbling.
Impatience brooks no stay. By Heaven, but that—

Ruf. Come, spare your threats, or I shall spare my service.
If I had known your madness had preferred
A sudden fall before deliberate comfort,
I could have fitted you.

Titus. Bring'st thou comfort then?

Ruf. Yes, were your ears prepared to entertain it.

Titus. Pardon a lover's passion, dear Rufinus:
Is beauteous Philadelpha then content
To make her heaven (for so is every place
Where she, celestial star, shall deign to shine)
In our yet duskish court? Which, if she do,
Memnon's miraculous palace set by ours,
Shall seem a cottage, or some coarser building.
Why stands my Mercury mute? Speak, will my love
Be pleased these circling arms shall be her sphere,
While our loved kisses make the music harsh,
The intelligencers on the winged spheres
Sound so divinely?

Ruf. Sir, you are too hasty;
Your eager appetite must wait a while
On ceremony; 'twould not fit the state
Of such a high-born lady to descend,
Or come at first beck.

Titus. Where's your comfort then?

Ruf. 'Sblood, give me leave, or starve! I'll keep it still.

Titus. Come, come, my rage is o'er. Pr'ythee, proceed:
How did she stand the parley? With what looks,
Or patience, entertain thy embassy?
Ruf. I'll tell you, sir: When first I spoke of love,
She started back, and marked her beauteous brow
With angry characters; still I went on,
And, by fair courtship and persuasion,
Moved her to ask what kind of man he was,
Or how compared with Tullius; which I,
With my best art sublimed, blazoned your worth,
Which made a deep impression; but your name
Dispersed all clouds, and, with a clear aspect,
Seemed to embrace your suit: only she craves,
Out of a longing virgin modesty,
A little time to ripen young desire
That buds already in her blushing cheek.
Titus. What time must we expect?
Ruf. But ten short days.
Titus. But ten short days, dost say? The siege of Troy
Was shorter far, though it were ten twelve moons.
The limping fire-god ne'er was half so hot
Upon the Gorgon-armed Minerva's lance
As I am upon her. Before that time,
If Tullius do survive, he may return:
Then where were all my hopes? No, I've a plot
To give slow time new wings.
Should love's bright flame live ten days here unquenched,
'Twould burn me into ashes. Hark! 'tis thus:
To-morrow's sun, by time's alternate course,
Lights the first day that gave life to these eyes,
Which, as propitious, we will celebrate,
And make an edict, that what lord or lady,
Any of noble blood, within ten miles,

That shall abstain from court, shall be condemned
As guilty of contemning majesty.
Ruf. What avails this?
Titus. Fie, art thou shallow yet?
Amongst the rest my angel will appear,
A white Albanian amongst Æthiops set;
She being a stranger and unskilled at court,
Her doubtful steps may easily be diverted
Some devious way[5] into some private place,
Where only love and I will wait on her.
How lik'st it, man?
Ruf. 'Tis rare,
A more invincible and cunning net
Than for Gradivus the black cuckold made.
Titus. Let it be straight divulged. Till that wished hour
The time with mirth and music we'll beguile.
[*Exit.*
Ruf. Are[6] thy besotted senses so soon fooled then?
Childish Martius! to think the cuckolding
Of him my soul abhors can end my anger.
'Tis like that Philadelpha may be led
From Vesta's temple unto Venus' bower,
And Tullius' brows may sprout: but what of this?
Great kings have had the like, nay, there be those
Above the crystal sky, armed on their foreheads.
No, my swift revenge
Shall snatch his thread of life from lingering fate,
And tear it into atoms! That's the end
My fiery rage must point at. The king's all set on lust;

[5] *Some* devious *way.*] I am not sure of having decyphered the second of these words rightly, as it is almost illegible in the MS.

[6] *Is.*] So the MS.

Murder's a sin too high for his low spirit.
Here I have framed a letter that discovers
His hot desire, Armanus' treachery,
And Philadelpha's weakness; this hid fury
I'll send him as a friend, which, when he reads,
Just then begins his ruin: He is bold,
And full of fury; then, in his fell rage,
He'll either leave the camp with his life's hazard,
Or plot some shallow treason 'gainst the king
Of pow'r and force enough to take off his.

Enter PEDESTER.

Pedester? come as wished for: Take this letter
Post to the camp, give it the general,
Or some that near attends him; be not slow.
I know thy trust; my only care shall be
To study recompence.— [*Exit* PEDESTER.
So, now 'tis done:
The god of wrath sits on my bended brow,
Triumphantly attired in Tyrian scarlet.
I'm over-racked with expectation
Of the event, this plot will train him to:
If this should fail, I have another snare
The devil cannot shun. *A desperate man,*
That climbs a tower whose top the wind ne'er touched,
Must chary[7] *be, lifting his resolute foot,*
Or headlong down he comes. Fate and I
So cunningly have framed this tragedy,
The curious looker-on, till it be done,
Knows not which way 'twill end, nor how begun.
[*Exit.*

[7] *Chary.*] *i. e.* Careful. So in the Pinner of Wakefield:
"Nor am I *chary* of my beauty's hue."

SCENE II.

An Apartment in Tullius' *House.*

Enter PHILADELPHA *and* FLAVIA.

Phi. Flavia, if Rufinus come again,
Say I'm not well, abroad, or any thing.
Fla. 'Troth, madam, you've enjoined me to a task
Will try me like a pack-horse; for these courtiers
Will never be said nay, but stand in't still,
Most if they find me lying.
Phi. Thou art still
In thy old rhetoric: But, Flavia,
I have more serious cogitations now
That crave advice of my best memory;
Therefore let none disturb me.
Fla. Not Armanus, madam?
Phi. Yes, he may;
He is my heart's companion, my soul's doctor,
Ministring heavenly physic that dissolves,
And takes away my greatest maladies.
Pr'ythee let none press in.
Fla. Let none press in?
I think it were the only way to cure
Your sickness. Venus, I beseech thee, keep me
Unmarried still, except I have a man
Will come home oftener! Here's a life indeed!
A virgin wife? Fie on't! But to my charge.
[*Exit.*

Phi. Why was I born a woman? Nature sure
Gave me these lineaments in mockery,
To tempt the world, and Envy joined with her
To make my life a scandal to my sex.
Fortune's both kind and cruel; seats me first
In highest honour, links me with a man,
In my respect above the world's esteem,
Then plucks me from his arms with iron hands,
And throws me in a dungeon: My dark thoughts
Which way to 'scape the king's lust, make it so.

Enter ARMANUS.

Arm. Still meditating, madam?
Phi. Oh, Armanus,
My sad fears still increase:
I have been pondering a thousand ways,
And clad my mind in Proteus' coloured robe,
Yet find no remedy but my resolve,
Which beyond death is constant.
Arm. Hold it still,
My death shall teach you how; but Heaven, I hope,
Will find a fairer dissolution.
I have bethought some means (sit, Philadelpha,)
To ease our doubts: I will delate 'em to you.
Fla. [*Within.*] She's not within, in troth.
Learchus. [*Within.*] We know she is.
Arm. What interruption's this?
Phi. Some visitants belike whose impudence
Will not be answered with a fair repulse.

Enter FLAVIA.

What are they, Flavia?
Fla. Serpents, madam, I think, they have such

stinging tongues in their mouths; if their tails be such there's no meddling with 'em: Courtiers they say they are: they have made me swell above the girdle-stead.[8] I cannot keep 'em out.

Phi. Alas, good Flavia, thou art troubled still.

Fla Nay, I have had a hundred more, I think. First comes a senator: I denied him; the very sight of his scarlet gown made me blush as red as a turkey-cock; but the grave gentleman, knowing what a virtue it was in a woman to keep counsel, rewarded my modesty and departed. Next comes a lawyer: he was so used to lying himself, he would hardly believe me; I put the case to him, which he not being able to stand in long, let fall his suit, and sneaked away again. After him a citizen, your jeweller, madam, asked if you wanted any precious stones; I made choice of a couple of his fairest, and said he should have's payment next time he came Then comes a page: the saucy jacket-wearer stood upon's pantables[9] with me, and would in; but I think I took him down ere I had done with him, and bade him go and rub his lady's roses.[1] But now these courtiers,—there's no doing with 'em.

Phi. Why, Flavia.—

Arm. Let 'em come,
'Can be no prejudice; we may beget

[8] *Girdle-stead.*] The place where the girdle is worn. So in Eastward Hoe: "Divide yourself into two halfs, just by the *girdle-stead;* send one half with your lady, and keep t'other yourself."

[9] *Pantables.*] *i. e.* Pantofles, slippers.

[1] —— *bid him go and rub his lady's* roses.] This refers to the large and expensive roses worn by the ladies and gallants of the time on their shoes. See vol. XI. p. 406.

Something from their intelligence may befriend us.

Phi. Your will's my law in all things.—Bring 'em in.

Enter LEARCHUS *and* LEONTIUS.

Learch. Why how now, my close counting-house? Do you stand [*To* FLAVIA.
So strict upon your office, not a man
Admitted without money?

Fla. Money? Marry, gip! You might have stood there till moss had grown o' your heels, except some friend had lent it. Such gay clothes seldom have silver linings.

Leon. A plaguy biting wench! I think she searched
Our pockets.

Arm. Noble lords.

Learch. Worthy Armanus,
We are bold visitants to see this widowed virgin.

Arm. Oh, your loves: she's much indebted to you;
You come in best time, she was sadly fixed.

Phi. Such entertainment as the house affords,
The owner being absent, shall be stretched
To bid your lordships welcome; but as yet
We know not well whether a bridal feast,
Or funeral banquet,[a] best befits ye:
Excuse then what is wanting.

Learch. You're all bounty.
Have you received no news then from the camp?

Phi. Not the least tidings yet.

[a] *A funeral banquet.*] It was anciently usual to provide a banquet, or cold collation, for the guests invited to a funeral, and the custom is not altogether obsolete at present.

Learch. 'Tis hot at court
Your happy lord has got the victory,
Repulsed the foe, and ta'en their strongest hold—
And there, I hope, is perished. [*Aside.*

Phi. Your news brings life: Truth live with you for ever!

Leon. The king for joy proclaims a festival,
Triumphs, and masques, rich courtly revellings,
And celebrates withal his royal birth-day.

Arm. When is this happy jubilee solemnized?

Leon. The ensuing morn, you shall have notice doubtless.

Enter RUFINUS.

Ruf. Before me, gallants? you have then made known
This preparation.—From my sovereign's mouth,
Lady, you are invited, the chief guest:
His edict bears command, but kind entreaty
Summons your lovely presence.

Phi. His command,
Whate'er our hearts be, must not be denied.

Ruf. You have best cause to come; 'tis only done
In honour of your lord and your high grace,
Which all Rome does rejoice at.

Phi. We are vassals unto Rome and him.

Ruf. You must cast off this veil of widowhood;
It ill becomes a beauty of your years,
A married virgin too: Your bridal robes
I think ne'er saw as yet a second sun.

Phi. We shall appear as best befits the time.

Ruf. A time oft wished for by Martius, madam.

Phi. A banquet and some wine!—Please you, my lords,

To taste such homely cates as the house yields.
Ruf. You are prodigal in all things but in vice.
Arm. [*Apart.*] This man's malevolent in his aspèct;
I look to hear the raven croak some news
That's baleful ere's departure; 'tis strange else.

Enter Servants with a Banquet.[3]

Phi. Pray, seat you, lords; we'll bear you company,
But with small stomach to taste any food.
Arm. Thou art all goodness, virtue's pattern right,
Shews love e'en to her greatest enemies.
Learch. Will not you sit, Armanus?
Arm. No, my lords,
I am my friend's sole steward, and my care
Consists in your free welcome.
Ruf. You are kind, sir,
And worthy such a friend,—here and in hell,
Whither I'll quickly send you. [*Aside.*

Enter Flavia.

Fla. News, news, news!
Phi. Thou never com'st without; good, there's no question.
Ruf. What is it, Flavia?
Fla. A fool, and like your lordship,[4] a mere ass,

[3] *A banquet.*] This was similar to our *desserts*, but much more costly, and not only served up after dinner, but frequently in the morning and evening. It was composed of sweetmeats, confectionary, fruits, baked meats, and other articles, generally very choice and delicate.

[4] *A fool, and like your lordship.*] *And* stands, as usual, for *an't*,

That thinks himself a wonderous wise man,
A politician too.
Arm. Gramercy, wench;
That jest shall purchase a new gown from me.
Fla. It is Sir Pergamus returned from camp
Ere he was half way there, holding up's snout
Like a sow smelling the wind; his mighty dwarf
Loaded with all his spoils and victories,
Which must hang up for trophies.
Learch. And he by 'em.
Fla. If honour take not place, 'tis like he may.
Ruf. I pr'ythee bring him in: His mirth may prove
Better digestion than[5] a doctor's pill.
Fla. Bring him in!
I warrant ye there's none can keep him out
If he hears talk but of a banquet once.
Leon. We shall hear wondrous stories, doubtless.
Ruf. The best will be some news of Tullius,
That may bring joy to you.—The warrior comes.

Enter Sir PERGAMUS *and* DINDIMUS, *bearing Trophies.*

Per. When sound the drums and trumpets that should tell
We are returned in triumph?
Dind. By and by, sir;
They have run so fast, sir, to gape after us,
They have not recovered breath yet.
Per. Dindimus,

i. e. if it like your lordship; but the old spelling must be retained to preserve the jest for which Flavia is to be rewarded by Armanus.

[5] *Than.*] This word is added in the MS. in a later hand.

Be sure to second whatsoe'er I say,
And swear it too, profoundly.
Dind. I warrant you, sir;
Stamp you and stare, let me alone to swear.
Per. All hail!
Learch. He begins to storm already.
Ruf. Sir Pergamus, welcome to Rome, brave knight.
Per. You have cause to bid us welcome, for you see
We have brought home the spoils of victory.
Dind. They have spoil'd me, I'm sure; such another load
Would make me a dwarf all days of my life.
Leon. What honoured trophies has your valour won?
Pray relate, Sir Pergamus.
Per. The first part
Of a bold soldier is to eat, you know.
Ruf. That's true, indeed; pray fall to, Sir Pergamus.
Dind. I am my master's second.
Per. Forbear, Dindimus,
We shall be thought unmannerly; therefore, first
We'll finish our discourse; only reserve
A modicum to relish in the interim.
Learch. Nay, pray take all *this pie,* Sir Pergamus.
Per. By no means.
Leon. Now, for your brave exploits.
Per. Behold this shield!
Dind. [*Aside.*] We bought it at an armourer's.
Per. This from the arm of bold Arminius,
The stoutest champion of the Sabinets,
When on my lance's point from his horse' back,
I bore't some three spears length, fell to the ground,

Which Dindimus took up; in that career,
Ere I could stay my Neapolitan steed,
Unhorsed some fifteen more.

All Oh, wonderful!

Dind. Nay, this is nothing yet.

Per. See you this tail?

Dind. [*Aside.*] I cut it from a dead horse that can now
Neither wigher nor wag tail.[6]

Per. This, with my scymitar, having cleft a man
Down to the saddle, my blade glanced along,
And pared it off by the stump; which shall adorn
The crest of Dindimus, that men may say,
Speaking of's honour, thereby hangs a tale.

Dind. Thanks, noble and renowned Sir Pergamus.

Per. But here, view this, the standard of the foe.

Dind. [*Aside.*] It cost ten drachmas at a painter's shop.

Per. This standing in the middle of the host,
I, with my page before me—

Dind. I went first.

Per. Made such a lane amongst the thickest troops,
That twenty men a-breast might follow me,
And brought this ensign thence[7] by force of arms.

All. Is't possible?

Dind. By Mars' great toe, 'tis true.

Learch. And yet you 'scaped unhurt?

Per. And free as you see.

Learch. 'Tis most horrible!

Ruf. But all this while what did the general?

[6] *I cut it from a dead horse, that can now Neither* wigher *nor wag tail.*] *Wigher* is an obsolete word for the neighing of a horse; *wiehern,* Germ.

[7] *There.*] MS.

Per. He fought upon the other side o' th' field;
But when they fled we met, and joined our force
To beat 'em into th' town; they barred their gates,
Which we as easily tore unto the earth
As I this tower of marchpane:[8] So we entered.

[8] *As I this tower of* marchpane.] This was a very favourite kind of confectionary, and very fashionable at banquets. It was composed of filberts, almonds, pistachoes, pine-kernels, and flour, and frequently formed to represent cities, towers, and other fopperies of the kind. In Mayne's Amorous War, one of the courtiers says to a servant,

——" What say you,
My pretty Diomed o' th' cawdles? will you
For one night lay aside your contemplations
How to take towns in *marchpane*; or express
The siege of Thebes, or travels of Ulisses,
In sweetmeats?"

From the following quotation from Taylor the Water-poet's Praise of Hempseed, it appears to have been a favourite and not very orderly joke among the banqueters, to dismantle these marchpane towers and cities:

" Lip-licking comfit-makers, by whose trade
Dainties, 'come thou to me,' are quickly made;
Baboones and hobby-horses, owles, and apes,
Swans, geese, dogs, woodcocks, and a world of shapes;
Castles for ladies, and for carpet-knights,
Unmercifully spoiled at feasting-fights,
Where battering bullets are fine sugared plumes,
No feare of roaring guns or thundering drums:
There's no tantara. sa, sa, sa, or force
Of man to man, or warlike horse to horse;
No mines, no countermines, no pallizadoes,
No parrapets, or secret ambuscadoes;
Of blood and wounds and dismal piercing lances,
Men at this fight are free from such mischances;
For many gallants guilded swords doe weare,
Who fight these battles without wit or feare:
All striving as they did for honour thirst,
All greedy which can give the onset first;
Each one contending in this candied coyle,
To take most prisoners, and put up most spoyle;

We only stayed there to refresh ourselves,
And so came posting home to bring the news.
Arm. It is a worthy story, and deserves
A recompence 'bove bounty.
Per. Cates we scorn,
Here's that's more worth than gold, or precious stone,
My smug-faced Flavia, for whose lovely sake
These hard adventures I did undertake.
Ruf. She cannot but requite you. Is't a match?
Fla. With all my heart.—The fool has wealth enough, [*Aside.*
Though he wants wit; whom I like fares the better.
Ruf. I will add something to't for our good mirth.
Arm. I'll see thou shalt not want, sweet Flavia.
Per. And are we met? Ring bells, and bonfires flame!
Go, Dindimus, this nuptial straight proclaim!
Come they that will unto our wedding feast,
For there will be a hundred geese at least.
[*Exeunt Sir* PERGAMUS, DINDIMUS, *and* FLAVIA.
Learch. Lady, I fear we are too long troublesome.

Retiring never when they doe assaile,
But most adventurously, with tooth and nayle,
Raze, ruinate, demolish, and confound,
The sugred fabricke levell with the ground;
And having layd the buildings thus along,
They swallow downe and pocket up the wrong;
That whoso that way afterwards doe passe,
Can see no signe where such a castle was:
For at these warres most commonly 'tis seene,
Away the victors carry all things cleane.
It fortunes in these battles now and then,
Women are better souldiers far then men:
Such sweet-mouth'd fights as these doe often fall
After a christning, or a funerall."

Thanks for our entertain.[9]

Phi. Welcome, that's all.

Arm. This fool speaks comfort. Learchus here
Says there is some speech of his victory.

Ruf. Yes, over death, [*Apart to* ARMANUS.
'Tis true; he has won that fort, Armanus.

Arm. How?

Ruf. Upon my life, most certain, he is slain;
But none dares whisper it unto the king,
Nor would I have your tongue the doleful bell
To ring it in her ears; but seek some way
In smoothest terms which way to publish it.
I'm studying how to break it to the king;
But not before to-morrow's triumph's end.

Arm. [*Aside.*] Rufinus is a villain, and I fear
This is some hellish stratagem of his
Aiming at Tullius' life, thus to divulge
His death ere it be acted. Swift as thought
I'll fly unto the camp: If there be plots
My notice may prevent [his] treachery. [*Exit.*

Phi. Whither's Armanus posted in such haste?

Ruf. Unto the court, where we must after him;
There's some important business of state
To be debated on. Madam, adieu;
Small thanks must now suffice for your great love.
Think of to-morrow's triumph. [*Exit.*

Phi. To my death
I'd go triumphantly. Oh, Tullius,
This is the latest night that thou canst stay:
Be it for ever nigh
See me disrobed o

9 *Entertain.*] This wo

SCENE III.

Before the Gates of the Sabine City The Tent of Tullius *on one side of the Stage.*

Enter Marcus Tullius, Marius, *and* Lelia *with a Letter.*

M. Tull. A letter, Janus?
Lel. Yes.
M. Tull. From whence?
Lel. From Rome.
M. Tull. My Philadelpha? No.
Mar. Armanus?
M. Tull. Neither,
You shall partake it presently.
Mar. Let's leave him.
[*Exeunt* Marius *and* Lelia.
M. Tull. [*Reads.*] "The king solicits your fair bride to lust;
Armanus is his cunning instrument,
And Philadelpha makes but weak defence:
If that your bed be pure, 'tis only want
Of opportunity defers the sin."—
Within there! ho!

Enter Bellario.

Bell. My lord?
M. Tull. Where's he that brought this letter?
Bell. Posted hence;

He said it craved no answer, and we[1] discharged
him.
M. Tull. I charge you on your lives make after
him,
And bring him back with speed! take swiftest
horse!— [*Exit* BELLARIO.
Armanus! Philadelpha! Eyes drop forth,
And lose your light for ever! Oh, ye gods,
How could you find out such a merciless
And murdering torture for an innocent man?
What deed of mine ever deserved so ill
As this inscription does inflict on me?
Erinnis sends her snakes in horrid clusters
To swarm about my breast; but here they find
Such matchless torments, that, their stings unfelt,
For shame they back retire. 'Oh,[2] fickle crea-
tures,
Euripus' madding billows do not rush
With half that swiftness on another's necks,
As do your perjuries and infinite sins.
Your love at best is [as] an April shower;
[Your] rosy cheeks[3] are shaded about with thorns,
That do not prick our fingers but our hearts.
Your pictures far excel you, for they have
All that is good in you, your outward feature,
But your infernal minds they, happy, want.
Beauty, at best, is like a blooming tree,
Fairest in bud, when it bears foulest fruit.

[1] *You.*] So the MS. The correction is obvious.

[2] *Oh.*] The following verses have a marginal line, and are then marked in another hand, *stet.*

[3] *Your love at best is an April shower;*
Rosy cheeks are shaded about with thorns.] I have ventured to insert the two words in brackets, which seemed equally necessary to the sense and measure. Fourteen lines lower down a similar correction was obviously requisite.

Fool that I am thus to invect[4] against her!
'Protest I had forgot she is a woman.'
What shall I do? Like a tame fool lament
My injuries with an unfruitful sorrow,
And still live wronged?—What are these last black lines? [*Reads.*
"Use your own will; censure me how you please,
What I have writ my life shall justify:
No friend's a friend till [he shall] prove a friend."
I am resolved: Grief, I discard thee now,
Anger and fury in thy place must enter.
King, it is thee on whom my rage must light,
And that best, worst of men, a faithless friend.
Just Vengeance bear me on thy violent wings
Quickly to Rome, and arm me with thy fierceness,
That, without fear or pity, I may prove
Heaven's instrument to punish treachery!—
Marcellus.

Enter Marcellus.

Mar. Calls my lord?
M. Tull. Call Marius hither, come along with him.— [*Exit* Marcellus.
Good gods! Armanus turned a villain too!
The story of Orestes was a fable,
I'll not believe that ever friend was faithful.—

Enter Marius *and* Marcellus.

I sent for you, and, captain, draw [you] near;
My suit is now to both: I do not doubt
Those protestations of your proffered loves,

[4] *Invect.*] *i. e.* Inveigh. I have not met with this word in any of the contemporary dramatists.

Of which we have had some trial, need again
A new oath to confirm me.—Kind friends, know
I must, but for what cause you must not ask,
A while forsake you, and must leave the camp
Wholly to your protection; 'tis my suit,
For fear my absence should be dangerous,
That you, till my return, under my name
Would see my place discharged.

Mar. To yield to this
Is but to accept my own advancement;
But, in the mean space, should the soldiers find
I were no general but a counterfeit,
Their scoffs at least, if not their violent rage,
Would persecute me, and, with shame and horror,
Work my destruction.

Tull. No such fear molest you,
For in the field I yet was never seen
But armed at all points, and but seldom so.
Wear my coat-armour, that disguise alone
Will make us undistinguished; but withal
Take this rich scarf which, for her sake that gave it,
Has been my individual ornament
And chiefest mark of note.—Marcellus,
Do you commend me to my nearest friends,
Entreat them wink at my departure;
If adverse fortune e'er chance to reveal it,
Be you my witness, that to honoured Marius
I thus resign all my authority.

Mar. Which I accept,
Although I know more dangers do attend it
Than wait upon a hundred diadems.

M. Tull. Pray do not think that fear or cowardice
Incites my blood to put these honours off,
This being the day of battle: Let suffice
The affairs that urge me are of such great weight,

I have scarce time to thank you. Fare you well.
[*Exit.*

Mar. Goodness guide thy actions whatsoever.

Marc. I wonder what's the matter with the general?

Mar. I neither know, nor do desire to know,
Since 'tis his will I should not.—

Enter LELIA.

Pretty Janus,
Look not so wild, my boy, nor wonder not
At this short transmutation, for anon
Thou shall partake it all; for thy discourse
And countenance too, next her that keeps my heart,
Hold it in their possession: thy lord's safe.

Lel. But from your tongue I would not credit truth
Till I beheld him so.

Enter BELLARIO.

Bell. Where is the general?

Mar. The news with thee?

Bell. The drums beat up, the enemy comes on,
They have forsook the town, and march in rank
As if they'd give us battle.

Mar. Let 'em come!
Order our troops, and bring 'em near us: the foe
Shall see against what odds they strive.—
[*Exit* BELLARIO

Now, Marcellus,
The first scene of a bloody act begins;
The chief part I must play, and till my bones
And sinews crack, I'll stretch my utmost strength

That I may truly imitate his worth
Whom I now represent. 'Tis my desire
To break a spear, the soldier's compliment,
With stout Sabinus, for I emulate
His daring valour —Janus, keep my tent,
A strong guard shall attend thee, for I vow
There's something in thee takes my fancies so
I would not have thee perish for a world.

Lel. Whate'er that unknown charm be, which to me
Is hidden as the cause that merits it,
By that love I entreat you, let these hands
Bear to the field your target and your lance,
And share with you this day your destiny
In all that shall be dangerous: Know, dear sir,
My father was a soldier, and that blood
I took from him which flows within this breast,
Not, swallow-like, foreseeing of a storm
Flags to the ground, but soars up higher still.
There's not a man, methinks, that dares touch you
But this weak arm can strike him to the earth.
Good sir, deny me not.

Mar. Have thy desire:
Yet I protest, if by untimely fate
These eyes should see thee sink, it would abate
All that is man within me. [*A flourish.*
Hark! they come.

Enter BELLARIO.

Bell. To parley, not to fight.
There is a herald sent out from their army
That craves admittance.

Marc. Let him have it. [*Exit* BELLARIO.

Enter a Sabine Herald.

Her. To the great general of the Roman host
Sabinus wisheth happiness.
Mar. We scarce credit it.
Her. If from his own mouth you desire to hear it,
He's marching hitherward, and craves a parley.
Mar. Tell him we shall expect him, and, on terms
That do not jar with honour, should be glad
To entertain his friendship. So return.—
[*Exit Herald.*
Though his high pride did fly above his reach
Making a daring challenge, I commend him.
The princely eagle, when she means to soar
The highest pitch, raises her lofty flight
From lowest valley; and if smooth-faced Peace
Yet step betwixt us, for his resolute spirit
I must both love and honour him.

Enter Bellario.

Bell. My lord,
Sabinus is at hand, but brings with him
Not past a dozen gentlemen, and they,
Instead of weapons, in their unarmed hands
Bear olive branches, signals of calm peace.
Mar. 'Tis wonderful that he who yesterday
Like a Leonidas stood for his country,
Out-threatening death and danger, should so soon
Change his determined course; but I'll suspend
My censure till the event make known
The certain cause. Like number meet; the rest
Fall off again.

Enter SABINUS, ARMINIUS, *and other Sabines, with Olive Branches in their Hands, and Colours wrapt up. A slow March.*

Sab. Renowned Tullius,
The valiant general of a warlike people,
Thus have we left our walls that might have scorned
Jove's battering thunder, or disjointing earthquakes,
Sent from the depth of hell; and in our hands
Bear the true emblem of our hearts, now filled
With a desire of peace; but on what terms
We entertain it, that can best resolve you.
[*Offers a paper.*

Mar. A herald!

Enter a Roman Herald.

Read those articles aloud,
That all may hear on what conditions
Great Martius frees his subjects' lives from peril.

Herald. [*Reads.*] "Titus Martius, king of the Romans, to Sabinus, captain of the Sabines, greeting.
Incited by
A religious care, wherewith the gods endued us,[5]
To save the blood of our dear countrymen,
Desiring rather to put up injury
Than right ourselves by too much cruelty,
We are contented not to cast our eye
Severely on those misdemeanours past,

[5] *Wherewith the gods endued us.*] Indued and endowed were anciently used indiscriminately. So in Othello, where Johnson and Steevens wish to read *subdues* without necessity:

"For let our finger ache, and it *endues*
Our other healthful members even to that sense
Of pain."—

That we may call them by so mild a name,
Our mercy may remit them; which but viewed
Severely, would pull on too great a ruin:
Wherefore, once more, not as impotent, but with arm'd hands
We offer peace on these conditions:
First, as a yearly tribute you shall pay
Seven hundred sestertias to the Roman crown;
Next, whene'er we have occasion,
Either of foreign or domestic wars,
You aid us with six thousand armed men;
And, lastly, you shall keep within your bounds,
Not suffering any upon pain of death
To rob and spoil upon our Latin confines:
If you consent unto these articles,
In all respects your liberty shall be
As large and free as in the days
Of our loved predecessor Tacitus;
If otherwise, expect the encrease of plagues
That war and Rome hath often laid on you;
But these confirmed, let Tullius our general
Enter your city with a competent number
Of well-armed men, and take the oaths of you
And your chief senators. Farewell."

Mar. Sir, we have heard
What we much wonder at; yet I rejoice
For your sake that Martius is gracious
To yield to what's here written. Let's join hands;
This knot of true-loved peace banish all former discords!

[*Within.*] Whoo!

Mar. How the glad soldiers do applaud this league,
Singing the same panegyric of peace![6]

[6] *Singing the same panegyric of peace.*] If this is not corrupt, the meaning must be—singing an unanimous panegyric of peace.

Then let's avoid delay.—Bellario,
You, with some few of our chief officers,
Shall to the city with us, where this league
Before the gods we must see ratified.
Our other soldiers now may rest themselves.
For those that will depart, give them their pay,
And let them take their pleasures.

Sab. Come, brave Tullius.

[*They march together, and at the entrance of the gate* MARIUS *is stabbed.*

Mar. Oh, I am slain! [*Falls.*

Lel. Treason! murder! help!

Sab. Shut up the gates, and suffer none to enter!
He falls that lifts a hand.

Lel. Villains, tyrants!

Sab. Bind fast that boy!

Lel. Sanguivolent murderers!
Can soldiers harbour such damned treachery?

Sab. Tullius, thy pardon. By a soldier's faith,
I much lament thy too hard fate, for see,
[*Throws down a letter.*
There is the crimson tyrant. 'Tis thy blood
From unknown feet frees our affrighted country,
Which shed, Titus Martius,[7] by the gods of Rome,
The powers of Heaven, of earth, of sea, of hell,
And the infernal shades, has bound himself
With ancient liberty to raise again
Our gorgeous buildings, battered down by war,
And seat us high as ever.

Mar. He the man? Oh!

Lel. Accursed fiend! barbarous, inhuman king!
Sabinus, see, behold the wretched wife of Tullius!

[7] *Titus Martius.*] This name is supplied by another hand, a blank being left originally.

Look what a woeful widow you have made!
Our loves scarce measured a short hour in essence,
But in expectancy it was eternal,
And so my grief must be, without a period;
For as the day ends with the setting sun,
So with thy death my happy days are done,
For I am lost for ever.

Sab. Matchless woman,
Witness the gods how much I pity you!—
Oh, gentlemen, why do you fix your eyes
So firmly upon me? I know the strangeness
Of this sad act may make my truth suspected;
I'll use no airy protestations now
To clear myself; but if you please to enter,
After our oaths are taken to preserve
Those articles of peace inviolate,
The funeral obsequies, and true shed tears,
Which to his everlasting bed shall bring
All that remains of this unfortunate,
I know not what to call him, shall express
How dear I prized his goodness: but the love
We bear our country beats all pity back.—
Take up the body.

Lel. Touch him not, you furies!
No blood-stained hands shall dare to touch the altar
On which I sacrifice these virgin tears,
Which shall outlast the marble which is laid
To cover his fair corpse. Stand off, I say!
Myself will see him coffined and embalmed,
And in one tomb rest with him.—Dear Tullius!

Sab. Cross her in nothing, let her use her will:
She has had too much wrong. Pray enter, lords,
For by our hearty sorrow you shall find
In all but this we bore a godlike mind.

[*Exeunt all but* Lelia *and* Marius.

Lel. Oh, Marius, I have wronged thy blessed spirit
To mourn thy death by a contrarý name,
But 'twas a sister's love; then pardon me.
If any life remain, fix but thine eye
Upon thy Lelia's sorrow, crying now
On Marius, Marius, breathing nothing else
Till my loathed breath expire. Oh, Marius!
Mar. What life-restoring balm those true love's tears
Pour in my bleeding wounds, able to free
A dying soul from death's strongest charnel-house!
But I am well, far distant from that place:
This shirt of mail worn near my skin
Rebated their sharp steel and killing points
Were darted at my breast. My greatest hurt
Is but a scratch compared to mortal wounds.
Yet I have changed my life, my life of woe,
And am transported into paradise,
Rapt above apprehension to behold
My dearest Lelia's sight: Hast thou been dead
To all men's knowledge since I first left Rome,
And dost survive to be my life's preserver?
Lel. I lived not else at all: But dangers now
Surround us every where; some sudden means
Must further our swift flight, or we are lost again
Past remedy.

Enter BELLARIO.

Here comes a trusty friend, Bellario.—
Oh, good Bellario, help me to convey
This habit where it may be hid for ever,
And lend us any garments; Marius lives;
Throw it in any pool. Thy coat and hat!
Nay quickly, dear Bellario. [*She disguises* MARIUS.

Mar. Thy reward for this,
Whene'er we see thee next, wants precedent
Of what thy trust hath gained thee.[8] Fare thee well!
Commend me to Marcellus: thou and he
Appease the mutinous soldiers, and make head.
You shall with speed hear from us.—Come, my bliss,
Never had man a happiness like this. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Forest.

Enter ARMANUS.

Arm. Thrice has my horse o'erthrown me; the last time
Fell stark dead under me: ominous signs!

[8] *—Thy reward for this,*
Whene'er we see thee next, wants precedent
Of what thy trust hath gained thee.] The construction is involved; the sense intended seems to be. "Thy reward for this which thy trust hath gained thee, and which thou shalt receive when we next meet, will want a precedent, or will exceed any similar reward yet given."

The scorching beams too weaken and make faint
My bruised limbs, that I of force must rest,
If rest dares steal into the dwelling place
Of grief and care.
If Tullius fell by damned practices,
And not by honourable dint of sword,
I take a solemn vow ne'er to return,
Or live 'mongst other creatures willingly
Than wolves and tigers, studying how to learn
Their savage fierceness, and to practise it
Upon their hearts were causers of his death.
My weariness[9] o'ermasters me, and fills
My head with strange distemp'rature; sleep weighs down
My eyelids. [*Sleeps.*

Enter MARCUS TULLIUS.

M. Tull. I would have no one marry, for it is
A foolish, vain, and idle ceremony;
Let every woman choose the man she likes
To pleasure her, and after him another,
Changing as often as the subtle wind,
The pale-faced moon, or their own wandering thoughts:
'Twere better far than thus with breach of faith
To fill the world with sin and bastard births.
Oh, Philadelpha, if thou dost prove false,
Betwixt the 'parched Indians, short-breathed men,
And longest-lived, cold Hyperboreans,
Lives not a constant woman. But, Armanus!

[9] *Weariness.*] There is a lacuna left here in the original handwriting, and the word is supplied in another apparently modern hand.

To see the antipathy 'twixt love and friendship!
As if it were ingrafted in the soul,
In which there is more pleasure than desire,
In will and in affection; like two hearts
Closed up both in a mold, that if one die
The poisonous infection kills the other.[1]
I would I could forget thee, for methinks
I am ne'er alone when I remember thee:
Such sympathy, conditions, manners, speech,
[In] studies, pleasures, inclinations
Bearing continual one thought and motion,
For such are perfect friends—I am o'erheard;
And yet I am not. There's a happy man;
No politic devices keep him waking
For mines of gold: my mad and mutinous thoughts
Will not afford me such a minute's rest.
These three days have these eyelids kept asunder,
And still unfriendly they deny to meet.
Yet I will lay me down by this blest creature;
It may be his example may teach me
How to beguile fond passions. [*Lays down.*
Arm. Forgive me, . [*In his sleep.*
I will revenge thy death, by Heaven I will.

[1] ——*But, Armanus!*
To see the antipathy 'twixt love and friendship,
As if it were ingrafted in the soul
In which there is more pleasure than desire,
In will and in affection, like two hearts
Close *up both in one mold, that if one die*
The poisonous infection kills the other.] The general meaning of these lines is sufficiently plain. Tullius is contemplating on the impossibility of love and friendship agreeing together in one person without the distraction of the one inducing the death of the other; but the meaning of the first part of the fifth line is so obscure, that some material corruption, such as the loss of one verse, or of two hemistichs, after the fourth line, is to be apprehended. One slight alteration (reading *closed* for *close*) is obviously necessary.

M. Tull. Alas, poor soul, he is afflicted too.
Methinks that face should be no stranger to me:
Armanus!
Oh, see the spring from whence comes all my woe,
Whose flattering bubbles show like crystal streams,
But I have found 'em full of Lernean poison.
How sound he sleeps! He is so used to sin,
Not the black furies that still hover about him,
Nor his own guilt that's ever calling him,
Can waken him; but here is that can do't.
[*Draws.*
Just Nemesis, that sit'st on sharpest thorns,
Twisting thy iron whips for perjured man,
Behold thy priest offer a sacrifice
That will be pleasing to thee!—My hand shakes.
Revenge and fury guard me round about,
And force calm pity and compassion back!—
Once more have at thee.—Still my arm wants strength,
And cannot hold my weapon.
Arm. Sacred spirit, [*Awakes.*
That from the ever-springing fields art come
To this unhallowed ground, why dost thou shake
Thy threatening sword, and so austerely bend
Thy incorporeal brow against the man
That ever loved and honoured Tullius' name
So dear, the natural antipathy
Betwixt my frail and thy immortal substance,
Which guilty creatures tremble to behold,
And drives their cold blood through their shaking joints,
Nothing dismays me; but with open arms
Run to embrace thy shadow. Shun me not!
By all my hopes of future happiness
Tell me but who they were contrived thy death,
And though the Cyclops guard them, or the race
That from his kingdom durst attempt to drive

The star-crowned monarch, yet my vengeful flame
Shall strike 'em down to hell, where thou shalt hear,
To those bless'd shades where all the worthies live,
Their tortured souls with anguish howl and yell.
Then do not fly my arms.

M. Tull. Villain, keep off!
Thou art mad; a pandar, nay, what's worse,
A traitor to thy friend.

Arm. Devil, or ghost,
Spirit of earth, of air, of active fire
(For Tullius thou art not; he never used
Such barbarous language to a faithful friend)
Therefore whate'er thou art that dar'st assume
The blessed shape of my dear murdered friend
Where goodness so long dwelt, prepare thyself;
My anger thus salutes [thee.] [*Draws.*

M. Tull. What dream's this?
What spirit or what murder talks he of?
This is a fetch past man's capacity.
Armanus, thou hast lost thyself too far:
I am no deluding goblin, nor false friend,
But real as thyself.

Arm. Lives Tullius then?
With joy and wonder thus——

M. Tull. Keep distance, slave!
Yes, I do live, and only live to be
A terror to thy falsehood.

Arm. These are words
I must not live to hear.

M. Tull. Villain, read that:
[*Gives him the Letter.*
So long I'll spare my justice, which shall fall
As horrid as thy fact. Does't startle you?

Arm. Whoever writ these black lies is a devil,
Which are as false and envious as himself:
Yet, if you can believe 'em, 'tis high time
That I were turned to earth. See, there's my sword,

And thus my breast flies open to your fury:
Strike, and strike home, and when my guiltless blood
Shall dye this green grass crimson, you shall see
How free 'twas from corruption.

M Tull. I am struck
With deep astonishment: If that were false,
To what end should that man, whate'er he were,
Engage himself so dreadfully? 'Tis a reach
Beyond my understanding. By the truth
And forepast protestations tied our hearts
In bonds of amity, (a greater oath
Sin cannot think upon) resolve my fear:[8]
Has not my Philadelpha 'filed her faith?

Arm She is as pure as the unspotted sun
Shining in brightest glory.

M. Tull. Does not the king solicit her?

Arm. He does;
And politic Rufinus haunts her hourly,
Like an ill spirit, striving to seduce her
To what she most abhors; 'twas he possessed
Me with your credulous death,[9]
And has by this divulged it to the king;

[8] Resolve *my fear.*] *Resolve* was anciently used in the sense of *satisfy*. So in A King and No King—"Thou shalt bid her entertain her from me, so thou wilt *resolve* me one thing."

[9] —*'Twas he* possessed
Me with your credulous *death.*] To *possess* a person with any thing, meant to acquaint him with it, to inform him of it. So in Massinger's Great Duke of Venice:

> — 'Three years the prince
> Lived in her company, and Contarino
> The secretary hath *possess'd* the duke
> What a rare piece she is."

The sense of the words, "your *credulous* death," is plainly "your death, which was to be believed;" but the expression is a very strange

Which rumour winged me on to fly to th' camp,
Doubting some dangerous plot laid 'gainst your life
That he so confidently spoke you dead.
By all my comforts hoped for, and those plagues
Which perjury would tremble to recite,
By our past friendship and unwrinkled truth,
Which hitherto I ever have adored,
What I have spoken is as free from blot
As is the firmament.

M. Tull. And I, as true, believe it. Pardon me;
Thus will I beg it from thee. Jealousy [*Kneels.*
And frantic rage, which from these lines took life,
And had their black original, bereft
And put me past myself. Now, I conceive
Rufinus' damn'd intent, to draw me from
The camp unto my death, or execute
Some hellish treason there. Heaven keep Marius safe!

Arm. Speak low, here's company.

Enter MARIUS *disguised, and* LELIA *like a post-boy.*

Mar. Let's rest a while, sweet Lelia, we have rid hard,
And, whilst our horses graze, refresh ourselves;
These pleasant groves yield comfortable shades.

Lel. Marius!

Mar. Ha! what affrights my love?

Lel. Saw you that face?

Mar. 'Tis——

one. There are more of these liberties taken with the language and uncommon phrases in this than in any other of the plays in these volumes. Towards the end of this scene we have this line:

"*Surcease* a while this *explicating* joy."

Lel. Tullius, my dear brother; that, Armanus.
Mar. Oh, everlasting comfort! Tullius—
M. Tull. Amazement! Marius! loving Janus too!
Joy and sad fear both struggle in my breast:
Your sights are Heaven, but the sudden cause
Forced you to leave the camp, and thus disguised,
Begets in me a wonder beyond thought.
Mar. And well it may. Oh, noble worthy lord,
I shall amaze you with strange stratagems.
Titus is a tyrant; bloody snares
And horrid treasons do begirt thee round;
But I was trapt with 'em, yet hate to think
Thy virtue knew of them.
Behold a warrant granted for thy death,
Upon condition of a feigned league,
Signed with his own hand and commanding seal,
Which I observed in all things void of fear,
And as I entered through their flattering gates,
Which stood wide open to receive us in,
Going to take their oaths of fealty,
I fell by their sharp weapons; witness these.[1]
[*Shows his wounds.*
But how I was restored and 'scaped with life
Will wonder you far more: here is the hand
That under heaven was my only safety.
M. Tull. Who? pretty Janus?
Mar. No, thy sister Tullius,
And my dear Lelia, that all this while
Like my good angel hath protected me:
The manner now's too tedious to rehearse,
For I could ever sit recounting it.
M. Tull. Is't possible, sweet sister, thou shouldst live
Thus long disguised, and serve me as my page,

[1] *Witness these* marks.] The last word is added by another hand, but unnecessarily.

And these eyes ne'er descry thee, that have took
Such infinite delight to gaze upon
The splendour of thy beauty? nay, I vow,
Wert not my sister, even doted on thee.

Arm. Is this your post? Was she your happy guide?
I could fast ever to kiss such a post.

M. Tull. Surcease a while this explicating joy,
And let us study how to be revenged
On this injurious king, King Machiavel [4]

Mar. For such a plot no fury ever formed.

M. Tull. Were all these honours and the gilded titles
He heaped upon my head against my will,
Laid on my shoulders for to weigh me down,
And sink me with black obloquy? Well, king,
The moon may dim the sun, and so may I
Wrap up thy blazing pride in a red cloud,
And darken thee for ever. Come to Rome:
We'll yet determine nothing; what we do
Occasion must present us. On to Rome.

[*Exeunt.*

[4] *King Machiavel.*] These words, containing a gross anachronism, which also occurs in Shakspeare's Merry Wives of Windsor and Henry VI., should probably be added to the speech of Marius.

SCENE II.

Before the Temple.

Enter in a dumb Show, two Flamens; after them one bearing an Offering for the King; then four Senators; after them TITUS MARTIUS, *talking to* RUFINUS; LEARCHUS *and* LEONTIUS *following; then* PHILADELPHA *richly attired, her Train borne up by Virgins, all carrying in their Hands several kinds of Sacrifice: so pass over the Stage.*

SCENE III.

A Banqueting-Room in the Palace.

Soft Music strikes. A Banquet being set forth, enter TITUS *and* PHILADELPHA, *who sit down at each end of one Table; then at another Side-table sit down* MARCELLANUS *and other Senators, and Old* TULLIUS, *then* RUFINUS, LEARCHUS, *and* LEONTIUS, *who wait on the King.*

Titus. Sit, glorious Philadelpha, there's thy chair,
To which thou'lt add more beauty than the sun

Can to his golden chariot. Reverend Tullius,
You have been long a stranger; this approach
Adds to your double welcome: There, sit there.
And you, Lucius Marcellanus, take your place;
'Tis for you and your fellow senators.

O. Tull. The king is full of sacred courtesies.

Titus. Sit, my dear beauteous guest; methinks, as we
Are placed in opposition, thou, like that
Eternal soul of nature, which can give
Or take at pleasure every excellence,
Add'st or depriv'st me of perfection.
'Methinks all dread, all reverence, majesty,
With which kings shake their footstools, like a flame
Leaves me to lodge in thy bright countenance.

Phi. If there be such a wonder, 'tis your grace
And favour which creates it; that withdrawn,
I am dark and nothing, only but your handmaid.

Titus. Thou art all man's wish can climb to.— Fill some wine! [*Drinks.*
Here's to thee, sweetness, and a solemn health
To noble Tullius and his victories!
You are all engaged, my lords; this must go round;
'Tis the king's friend, nay, his companion.
[*The health goes about.*

1 *Sen.* Sir, you're a happy man that does enjoy
A son of this rare merit.

O. Tull. Rather blest
To have a king, whose judgment can infuse
Merit, where merit's wanting.

2 *Sen.* Noble sir,
You are not short in this felicity
To have a daughter past all parallel:
In brief you're both true maps of happiness
In having such rare children.

Marcellan. They're the gifts

Of Heaven, not of Nature.
O. Tull. Mine, alas,
Is what the king hath made him; so far good
As goodness sparkles in his actions;
Though grief be my remembrancer, I must
Confess I have lost ten sons, in every part
As hopeful, good, though not so fortunate,
In loss of my dear Lelia.
Ruf. How fain the old man would be flattered,
And yet not seem to catch it!
Lear. Oh, it is
A modesty which strives how to convert
Praise into adoration.
Leon. Rather, sir,
Your coy whore's rhetoric, ever to deny
What they would swallow with most greediness.
Ruf. May superstition choak them! 'What's this toy,[5]
Or idol they so reverence, but a spunge
Filled with the king's waste moisture, or a bag
Blown with the breath of greatness? When the hand
Of wrath shall squeeze it, or a little pin
Prick but the windy outside, down falls all,
And leaves him nought but despised emptiness.
'*Lear.* Come, you're too bitter. See, how the king sits gazing!'
Titus. Whence is this music? [*Music within.*
Ruf. 'Tis, as I conceive,
A warning of the masquers' readiness,
Prepared to attend your triumphs.
Titus. Let them come.

[5] *What's this toy?*] Thus altered in another hand—"See, the king's entranced!" The following lines being omitted in the representation, it was necessary to retain these words, which occur, with some variation, at the end of the speech of Leontius.

Quickly remove these tables!—Here's your place,
For all things this night strive to honour you.—
More lights and more attendants!—Sit, my lords,
Revels ask elbow-room at all times. So.

Enter the Masque, in which is Young TULLIUS, MARIUS, *and* ARMANUS, *dressed as Furies, with Torches, and* LELIA *in Lady's Habit; they dance with the Ladies.*

You have done to the height of motion; 'yet I'll
give
Dancing a greater glory: 'Tis but lame
When beauty shares not in it; here are they
Can give life unto measure. Hand her, lords.
Nay, you must not excuse it; for but you,[6]
Perfection hath no crown to triumph in.
'*Phi.* Your majesty will make me to disclose
Errors I would have hidden. [*She dances.*
'*Titus.* Say not so,
You can show art rules to astonish her.
How like the nimble winds, which play upon
The tender grass, yet press it not, or fly
Over the crystal face of smoothest streams,
Leaving no curl behind them; or how like
The yellow-feathered Hymen when he treads
Upon the soft air's bosom, doth she pass
Observed by admiration! Why, she makes
Motion the god of every excellence,
And what the muses would with study find,
She teaches in her dancing; 'tis indeed
A school to teach all we call liberal.
I cannot give her worth a name; to me
It must suffice only to say, 'tis she.
[*The Dance ends.*

6 *But you.*] i. e. Excepting you, without you.

'*Lear*. This is no rich idolatry.[7]
'*Ruf.* Yes, sure,
And set out to the full height; *there nor wants*
Imbosture[8] *nor embroidery: What dull eye*
But sees the swelling boscage, and your trails
How they do hug and stifle flattery?
'Leon. *No more, the king observes us.*
'*Titus*. Blessed thing,
Come, I have wronged thy sweetness, and I know
Thou'rt weary; but I'll make a recompence.'
See, that a [stately] banquet[9] be prepared
To entertain the masquers; they've this night
Tied to their king a strange beholdingness,
And I am all your debtors. Call for lights!
We'll to our chamber straight. Madam, your rest
Must be to-night in the court, that and I
Are both proud you will grace it. Rufinus, 'tis
Your honour to attend her. So to all
Good night and best repose. Reverend Tullius,
Thou good old man, much peace.—But thousand happy rests
Dwell on thy noble bosom. [*To* PHILADELPHA.
Phi. Ten times those,
Doubled in myriads, live with my sovereign.
[*Exeunt all but* RUFINUS, PHILADELPHA, MARCUS TULLIUS, ARMANUS, *and* MARIUS.
M. Tull. Marius, Armanus, as you are noble friends,

[7] *This is no rich idolatry.*] The negative was frequently ironically added to express a superlative degree. So in the Double Marriage:

"Here's *no* flattering rogue."

[8] *Imbosture.*] That is, raised work.

[9] *See that a banquet.*] So the MS. An adverb was evidently intended to be inserted, which I have ventured to do.

Go to the privy garden, and in the walk,
Next to the stillatory,[1] stay for me,
I must adventure something. Give me that torch.

Mar. Arm. Dispose yourself, we will attend your coming. [*Exeunt.*

Ruf. Who waits there? Lights for the noble lady!

M. Tull. They are ready, and attend you.

Ruf. Away before then.
Lead to the chamber called Elysium. [*Exeunt.*[2]

SCENE IV.

A Bed Chamber splendidly furnished.

Enter TULLIUS *disguised, with a Torch,* PHILADELPHA, RUFINUS, *and Ladies.*

M. Tull. This is the lodging called Elysium.

Ruf. It is your lodging, madam; here the king
Prays you may sleep with comfort.

Phi. Sir, I'm bound
To his respect and your most noble trouble.

[1] *Next to the* stillatory.] *i. e.* Distillery, which seems to have been a usual appendage to the houses of the gentry at the time. In Sir Henry Wotton's Elements of Architecture, 1624, he gives directions for placing the kitchen and the *stillatory.*

[2] *Ex. y. Tull. Phy. and Ruff. then a rich bed is thrust out, and they enter again*] This stage direction proves that there was no alteration of scenery at the representation, and is a strong proof of the validity of Mr Malone's observations on the poverty of ancient theatres, in his Historical Account of the English Stage.

Ruf. Avoid the chamber, and put out your torch.
M. Tull. Is this the devil's [chamber?][3]—I am gone,—
But not so far as mischief wishes me;
I must attend your night-spells. Arras, thou
Shalt hide my body, but light my understanding.
[*Puts out the Torch, and steps behind the Arras.*
Phi. Sir, I beseech you let my women stay,
They must this night attend me.
Ruf. Oh, not these!
These to attend your person? Madam, know,
The greatest dames of Rome and Italy,
Nay, the altezzas and their sovereigns,
Must this night do you service; as for these,
They must spare their duties.
Phi. Good my lord,
Let mine own creatures serve me; others will
In this work supererogate, and I
Shall think their diligence a mockery.
Ruf. Nothing so,
You shall find virtue in their services.
Come, ladies, you must vanish.
[*Exit with* PHILADELPHA's *Women.*
Phi. I do not like this courtship.—Ha! the door
Locked up and bolted? in the name of truth,
What differs this from strong imprisonment?
Virtue, thou art my mistress, and I sit
Under thy shade so safely, that methinks
Dishonour dare not touch me. Yet, alas,
Man is an untamed creature, and dare break
Through any fence of goodness: 'Help me, then,
Oh, sacred Virtue, and mine innocence!

[3] *Is this the devil's*   *I am gone.*] So the MS.

Enter TITUS MARTIUS.

Titus. 'They will, believe it; never didst thou ask
What piety denied thee.'
Phi. Now I see I'm ruined:
In the name of wonder, sir, what make you here?
Titus. To tell thee truth, not wonders, for no eye
Sees thee but stands amazed, and would turn
His crystal humour into atomies[4]
Ever to play about thee.
Phi. Sacred sir,
Oh, let me understand you!—Yet, sir, hold,
Let me not understand you; let me be
Dull as the earth, more ignorant than fools,
Rather than know you are dishonourable.
Titus. Let not suspicion scare you, or respect
Of that which is but nothing make you run
From the height of all great fortunes. Plainly, sweet,
I love you, dearly love you; love you so
As no speech can express it, and have by art
And such discretion shaped opportunity,
That malice cannot touch you in your honour.
Come, you must be kind.
Phi. Great sir, keep farther distance! you speak poison.
M. Tull Ha! here is some hope in her goodness.
Titus. Do not with coyness cast that fortune off
You would with torments purchase; be to me
The sweetness which I long for, and to all

[4] *Atomies.*] This was the usual way of spelling and pronouncing *atoms.* So in As You Like It: "It is as easy to count *atomies* as to resolve the propositions of a lover."

Thy thoughts, thy wishes, and thine actions,
No power shall put a girdle; thou shalt be
Greater than greatness thinks on, sway more hearts,
Have more eyes hanging on thee, and command
More glorious titles and more sovereignty
Than is spoke of Egypt and Assyria.

M. Tull. Now do I see
The devil's a cunning book-thief, and hath robbed
The honest schools of their best rhetoric
To tempt poor virgins' weakness.

Titus. Poppæa, when she met her emperor
Clad in the wealth of many monarchies,
Nor rich Paulina that out-braved the sun,
And made him dark with sparkling jewelry,
Compared with thee shall be as poor and dull
As wasted dross or baser excrements,
Only let me enjoy thee.

M. Tull. Hold now or never!

Phi. I took you, sir, to be the only thing
The earth could call her good one, and no doubt
You are no less, only now seek to prove
How an ill thing would scare me. Pray, sir, think
These foul ingredients cannot alter me.
Trust me, I prize poor virtue with a rag
Better than vice with both the Indies.

M. Tull. This is some comfort, if it have constancy.

Titus. Be not a fool for custom, know my worth,
And who I am that do solicit you;
Think of the crowns hang o'er you, crowns of joy,
Honour and reputation; if they fail,
Think of the swords I carry, swords of shame,
Contempt, disgrace, slander, and infamy,
And think with these how I can torture you,
Nay, whip you to obedience; and by Heaven
I'll spare nought to afflict you.

M. Tull. [*Stepping forward.*] Yes, you will,
Virtue I know must be no instrument.
Titus. How's this? surprised? oh me! 'tis Tullius.
M. Tull. Yes, it is Tullius, Tullius the unfortunate.
Are you a god, a king, nay, but a man,
And dare commit this outrage? Do you know
A good thought and dare speak thus? Good sir, think,
Although I am your subject, and do view
Each beam that shines about you, *and conceive*
How dear you are to the gods, to angels, saints,
The world, and mankind; though I know you are
A temple so divine and hallowed,
That but to dream ill of you were to plunge
Men's souls into damnation; yet, to it
Think what this woman is: My wife, sir, she's my wife,
My chaste dear wife, a word that's precious,
Self of myself, nay, such a self beyond,
That where she falls my fame is perished;
Mine did I say? nay, my posterity,
Mine utter generation, all my name
Lost and undone to all eternity!
How this will tempt a good man, oh, sir, think,
Tremble and fear to think it.
Titus. Be not jealous.
M. Tull. Not jealous, and have heard your blasphemy?
What slave can be so stupid? Sir, if you
Have raised me for this merit, or built up
My low foundations with strange pinnacles
Higher than other's buildings; if you have
Made me a glittering outside, but within
Store nothing but dishonour, cast me down,
Beat me to dust; my ashes will appear

A monument more glorious than your palace.
Titus. On my life,
Thou dost mistake me strangely.
M. Tull. 'Would I did,
So I might perish for it; but my eyes
And own ears are my witness.
Titus. Come, no more:
They have told you a false message, and your heart
Seduced by them is much too credulous;
For I protest by all that's good or holy,
Never did I conceive 'gainst her or thee
A thought of so much baseness. What is done
Was done for special caution; first, to stop
Their poisoned mouths I know do envy you,
Next to convert their malice to this ground
Which else had touched thy person; next to try
The temper of her goodness, and how far
Corruption might work on her, which I find
Past praise and past example, and she is
The jewel I renowned her, and indeed
Worthy the love of noble Tullius:
'Twas this design that led me; by my life,
No other thought came near me.
M. Tull. It was a course pious and full of virtue,
A deed for which I ever owe a debt
Of terror and affliction: Fearful king,
Nay, impudent transgressor, now thou seest
Thy lustful breast lie bare to my revenge
Coin'st these apparent falsehoods; but I have
Strange and undoubted causes: witness this,
This warrant for my murder; besides that,
The articles of peace you sent the rebels
Sabinus and Arminius, but the cause
Was written in a bloody character,
Such as I think had never precedent;
This can speak how firm is your affection.
[*Gives him the warrant.*

Phi. I am lost in my amazement: Dearest, speak,
What warrant for thy murder?

M. Tull. Oh, my love,
Time will not now permit me to relate
The cruel circumstance; thou shalt partake it.

Titus. What slave or hell-hound has abused my truth,
And forged this slanderous writ? Oh, my Tullius,
I cannot blame thee now had thy just rage
Flown out above man's temper. This would move
A creature without gall Who should be
This angry billow that thus seeks to drown
The fair bark I would nourish? By dread Jove,
I will sift out this swelling sycophant,
And beat him down so flat, so low, so dead,
Make him so smooth and calm, that but his shame
There shall be nothing to remember him.
Tullius, by this embracement credit me
I am sound in all thoughts to thee. Do not neither
Believe nor them nor me; but as short time
Shall prove this lie most odious, so let truth
Shine in my other actions. With all speed
We'll call a present council, and send post
For proud Sabinus,
Who dreadless in his articles may come;
If not, we'll force him hither; you, disguised,
Shall hear our strange proceedings; thou shalt see
How quaintly I shall trip 'em. Love this sweet,
She is a thing for Heaven to envy at,
And tell thyself thou hast all the joys of life,
A perfect royal friend and faithful wife. [*Exit.*

M. Tull. 'Would I could hope the first, the last is sure,
And both I'll seek to perfect.—Come, my love,

Thou hast played the part of goodness royally,
And I'll strive to deserve it. Yet, since things
Lie but at half discovered, for a time
In some strange shape[5] I'll shroud me,
Free from the knowledge of the king or any,
Until these tares be weeded; when they're ripe,
I'll be myself, and shine unlimited.

Phi. Your will is my direction, and I'll move
Only by your commandment and your love.

[*Exeunt.*

[5] *Some strange* shape.] *Shape* is generally used in old plays for a habit or dress, particularly one used for a disguise. So in A Very Woman, by Massinger, Antonio says,

——— "When I was
Myself, set off with all the grace of greatness,
Pomp, bravery, circumstance, she hated me,
And did profess it openly; yet now,
Being a slave, a thing she should in reason
Disdain to look upon; in this base *shape*,
And since I wore it never did her service,
To dote thus fondly!"

SCENE V.

A Temple.[c]

Enter Sir PERGAMUS, *the foolish Knight, like a Bridegroom, leading* FLAVIA, *his Bride;* BELLARIO, *the singing Soldier;* BLACKSNOUT *the Smith,* SNIPSNAP *the Tailor, and* CALVESKIN *the Shoemaker.—An Altar to be set forth with the Image of Mars;* DINDIMUS *the Dwarf bearing Sir* PERGAMUS' *Lance and Shield, which are hung up for Trophies, and Sir* PERGAMUS *vows, for the Love of* FLAVIA, *never to bear Arms again; the like does* BLACKSNOUT, *who hangs up his Sword, and takes his Hammer, vowing to God Vulcan never to use another Weapon. The Tailor and the Shoemaker do vow the like to God Mercury. Then* BELLARIO *sings a Song how they will fall to their old Trades. A Clap of Thunder, and all run off. Finis 4 Act.*

Per. There hang, thou fatal engine of my wrath,
Thou great divorcer of the soul and body,
Which three-score princes, emperors, and kings,
Besides some thousand lords, captains sans number,

[c] The following is entitled in the MS. "The Plott of a Scene of Mirth, to conclude the Fourth Act." This plot is verbally copied from the original. The scene itself which follows is affixed on a separate piece of paper, and in another old hand-writing. Whether it was subsequently added by one of the authors, or whether the comedians employed some other playwright, as they frequently did, to write it for insertion at the representation, cannot be now decided.

One lance-prisado[7] and a sutler's wife,
Hast sent to Erebus and dismal lake;
Hang there, I say, and this the world shall grant
None e'er shall use[8] the like but John of Gaunt.

All. Oh, rare, rare Pergamus!

Per. Now give me that! [*Takes the Shield.*
Come thou, thou faithful bulwark to my breast,
Thou that keep'st off the cannon-shot like hail,
Cut through and through some four-score inches deep
With direful strokes and dreary hardiment;
Whose wide-mouthed trenches keep imprisoned.
Five thousand captains couchant to thy mercy,
Which must yield Pergamus a world for ransom,
Terror, hang there! no Guildhall shews the like,
Bloody in peace, but in war politic.

Dind. Go on, brave Pergamus, the son of fame,
The child of fortune; all men know the same.

Fla. A periphrasis of a fool that fortunes favour.[9]

Per. Hang there, ye instruments of blood and rust!
Hence, fighting vain! My Flavia must be buss'd.
Yet thus far, Mars, I will thy soldier be,
And valiantly in thy great quarrel strike,
When Flavia teaches me to raise the pike.

Black. Blacksnout the like doth vow, and in a word

7 *Lanceprisado.*] The lowest rank of non-commissioned officers at the time. See vol. VII. p. 125.

8 *Shall use.*] I am not certain of having properly decyphered these words. See the fac-simile, No. II.

9 *Fla.*] This speech is added in the margin, and began originally, " A riddle for a fool." The alteration is in the same hand as the rest of the scene, and this strongly indicates that this part of the MS. is original, as furnished by the author of it, whoever he was.

Into a hammer I'll convert my sword.
Though Venus Vulcan horn, I'll wive: our hall[1]
Increased by us may grow a capital.
I am for Vulcan now, for Mars no more;
If my wife scold, my bout-hammer[2] shall roar.

Snip. Turn garment, tailor, too, and be not barr'd:
I'll marry and betake me to my yard,
And if my trade then prove not worth a dodkin,
Curse, curse o' women, both my yard and bodkin!

Calve. Then, shoemaker, the last of all the rout,
Of tailor, Pergamus, or fair Blacksnout:
By Mercury I swear it is my draught
To take a wife and use the gentle craft.

SONG *by* BELLARIO.

Then farewell the drum, pike, gun, and the fife!
If a man loves jarring and plenty of strife,
To try his valour let him take a wife,
And to our old trades again.
Chorus. *And to our old trades again.*
Come, Pergamus, tailor, and Blacksnout too,
The shoemaker will teach your wives all what to do,
For if you tread awry they'll underlay you:
Then to our old trades again!
Chorus. *Then to our old trades again!*
So, furious Mars, we bid thee adieu,
We care not for killing, it's a life for a Jew:
So let us be jogging with our jovial crew,

[1] *Our hall.*] Alluding, I suppose, to the hall of trade.

[2] *Bout-hammer.*] Probably a technical term for a blacksmith's hammer. *Bout*, besides its present signification, signified formerly a blow.

And to our old trades again!
Chorus. *And to our old trades again!*
[Thunder.

Bell. Oh, the gods are angry! Let's begone.
All. Oh, oh, oh! [*Exeunt running.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Before the Palace.

Enter LEARCHUS *and* LEONTIUS *meeting, muffled up in Cloaks.*

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!
Leon. Why dost thou laugh, Learchus?
Lear. To see us two walk thus like Saturnists
Muffled up in a condensed cloud.
Why art thou sad, Leontius?
Leon. 'Troth, I know not.
Why art thou melancholy?
Lear. Hang me if I can tell. Oh, now I remember:
The king is discontented, and we courtiers
Are like the Macedonian humourists,
'Cause Philip had a wry neck they wore theirs so,
And said 'twas all the fashion: yet, methinks,

'Tis something more than strange
To see this sudden alteration;
Last night he was unbounded and profuse
In mirth and jovialty,[3] but looks this morn
As if he had drunk Lethe.

Enter Rufinus.

Ruf. Plotting still?
You think to outdo me now in some rare springe
To catch this green-head general; but you shall not,
Nay, you cannot: know, brave spirits, 'tis done;
Our stratagem has taken rare effect,
The peace is made, the articles confirmed,
The execution past, and Tullius sunk
Lower than policy can ever search,
Or plumb the unfathomed bottom.—
What means this silence? Do not your glad hearts leap
Into your bosom to hear this brave revenge?
Have you thus far mingled your bloods with mine,
And waded hand in hand through death and hell,
And do you now repent?

Lear. Leon. Repent!

Ruf. What then portends this sadness?

Lear. Understand it:
Saw you the king to-day?

Ruf. No. What succeeds your question?

Lear. He is wondrous discontented.

Ruf. What of that?

Leon. Think you he has not caught intelligence
Of Tullius' murder, or this feigned truce?

Ruf. Why, say he have, do you shrink or shudder at it?

[3] *Joueltie.*] So the MS.

We have ventured too far in to retire now:
But I'll take off that doubt, 'tis no such thing,
Neither does grief or anger make him show
A wrinkled front or a dejected look;
'Tis rather too much joy, surfeit of pleasure,
And those sweet delights with which he has been
sated
This last night [in] the arms of Philadelpha;
Tullius' fair hoard was made his cradle
In which the devil and lust sate rocking him.

Lear. Is't possible? is Tullius' mounted higher?

Ruf. Yes, on the horn of greatness.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Ruf. And being fixed, perchance,
In meditation of these sugared sins,
He did not greatly mind ye; there's his sadness:
But when we come in presence you shall see
Another change of countenance, for I am
The served-up instrument whose tearing brain
Gives motion to his actions.—

Enter Messenger.

Sent to me?

Mess. And all your honours.
The senate sits this morning instantly,
The king in person too, but for what cause
None but himself yet knows..

Ruf. 'Tis a short summons: well, we shall attend him. [*Exit Messenger.*

Lear. What thinks Rufinus now?

Ruf. By Jove, I am puzzled; yet, now
To forge or study for replies would show
A shallow brain. Let not our timorous guilt
Betray ourselves; and scorn the worst event;
If we must down let us like cedars fall,
And make an earthquake tumbling, that our fame

May live to after-ages, and our acts
By all rare politicians be eternized:
'Tis nobler far than live in such a state
Where worth hath no reward, merit no grace.
Can virtue spring where true regard is wanting?
It is impossible: Thus join we then,
And let our fates be like the elements,
So linked and chained that none can break the twine
But they that twisted it. This knot, methinks,
Resembles just the trinal sisterhood
That spun our thread of life: make much on't then.
Before the destinies do wind it up
They shall have many turnings. But when you see
There is no remedy, let one stroke divide us.

Lear. Leon. 'Tis resolved.

[*Cornets play a Lesson.*

Ruf. The senate s coming, fall into the train.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Capitol.

Enter MARCELLANUS, *Old* TULLIUS, *and two other Senators; then* TITUS MARTIUS, RUFINUS, LEARCHUS, LEONTIUS, *and other Attendants;* MARCUS TULLIUS *in Disguise, among other Petitioners.*

M. Tull. I hope this habit's undiscoverable,

[*Aside.*

In which, as in a perspicle,[4] I shall see
These hidden furies tread the devil's maze.

Titus. Grave fathers,
You in whose wisdom rest the states of kings,
Whose prudent and discreet directions
Uphold and govern all things next the gods,
To you I now appeal, and shall in brief
Declare the motive that incited us
To call this sudden council. I must first
Confess my rashness, that, without advice
Of your sage judgments and a general voice,
We made a general thy son, Tullius,
And him sent forth without a full consent
Against the Sabines that invaded us;
The error is acknowledged, yet, my lords,
The strong necessity considered,
The fierceness of the insurrection,
And devastation which the rebels used,
Was cause sufficient for a present choice
Without deliberate council.

2 Sen. 'Twas most fit.

Tul. A policy both good and requisite.

Titus. We are excused for't then. But, reverend senate,
Having since weighed by weighty circumstance,
Grounded on reason, that the opinions
And several censures of the commonalty,
And some of our great peers too, may, perchance,
Out of their ignorance raise a mutiny
That might in time work a conspiracy
Against young Tullius,
Not being elected by a public voice,
(For what they do without [all] malice moves,
But thousands envy where a king once loves)[5]

[4] *Perspicle.*] Properly, *perspicil*; a perspective glass.

[5] *For what they do without malice moves,*
But thousands envy where a king once loves.] Some word has

These known examples make us cautelous[6]
Of future dangers: therefore, once more, lords,
Deliver your minds freely; if you think
His youth or judgment, strength or discipline,
Debilitate his person, or his birth
Make him unfit to undergo a place
So eminent and powerful, call him home,
Choose a more able, more experienced man,
That thirsts for such an honour, and let him
Revel at home here with his beauteous bride:
Poor soul! She has the most wrong; such a war
Were far more pleasing to a courtier,
One so complete and young as Tullius is,
And questionless she'll thank ye. Now, you hear
The cause of your assembly, speak your thoughts,
And let your hearts and tongues so sympathise
That truth may write the comments.

O. Tull. Royal sir,
I humbly crave I may be pardoned,
And licensed to suspend my censure yet,
Until that their opinions be all passed:
A father's doom will be thought partial,
Though the gods record it.

Titus. Use your will.

Marcellan. I beg like liberty, dread sovereign:
We two are equal sharers in his honours;
'Twould ill beseem us to detract from him.

Titus. Shall one man speak for all, then?

All. Willingly.

evidently been dropped by accident in the first of these lines, which I have ventured to supply. The meaning is—"What is done by the popular voice proceeds or is executed without any malicious interpretation, but thousands envy and malign what a king does, actuated by love or affection."

[6] *Cautelous.*] i. e. Cautious. So in Julius Cæsar, Brutus says,

"Swear priests, and cowards, and men *cautelous*."

1 *Sen.* And whom your majesty shall please to call,
His voice shall give a general approbation.
Titus. Rufinus, you are he then.
Ruf. I, my liege?
Titus. Refusal is in vain, we'll have it so.
Ruf. The most unworthiest creature.
Titus. Wrong not your worth, we know your merits, sir.
You have done good service in the like affairs,
And know best what belongs to't: Therefore, speak.
Ruf. With pardon then I shall.
Your highness might have made a surer choice
Of an approved soldier; but a man
More daring and more valiant, Rome contains not;
For what he wants in years and discipline,
His industry and spirit countervails;
He's mild and courteous to the people too,
Which is the chain that ties the soldiers' hearts
And general's together; last and chief,
He's fortunate, crying as Cæsar[7] did,
Who, being tossed in a small boat at sea
In a tempestuous storm, cheared up the mariners
With, 'On, brave hearts! Think not of fear, you bear
Me and my fortunes;'
Which shows that resolution is the crown
Of all a soldier's honours, and brings in
A happy conquest: All this Tullius has.
No doubt need to be made then of his worth,
But that he still enjoy it.
All. 'Tis confirmed.
Lear. Stand away,
I pr'ythee let me hug him; by this hand,

[7] *Cassius.*] Corrected in the MS. by another hand.

Leontius, the devil's a novice to him.

M. Tull. [*Apart.*] I am swallowed in this quick-sand; all my thoughts
Again are quite diverted: He speak thus!

Titus. Rufinus, you have given a noble verdict,
We are become your debtor.

Lictor. [*Within.*] Back there, back! keep back.

Ruf. What uproar's that, disturbs the senate?

Enter a Lictor.

Lictor. A captain post from the camp

Titus. Admit him straight.

Enter Marcellus.

Lictor. Your sword.

Marc. No, sir, 'tis kept for a far better use,
Than cut his master's throat.

Ruf. A guard!

Marc. Ten guards! There are some persons here
Ten millions cannot shelter.

1 *Sen.* What means this?

Marc. King, king! senate!
Oh, that I could speak to you in a tone
Would drown the voice of thunder, that, the sound
Being echoed by this marble capitol,
Each syllable were doubled in your ears,
Or that you had more hearts, for those weak strings
Will crack at the first sentence. Tullius is——

All. What?

Marc. Dead; (does that damp you?) he is murdered.

All. Ha! Murdered!

M. Tull. [*Apart.*] Now it begins to work.

Marc. Yes, murdered,

Butchered by most inhuman slaughter, treachery.

O. Tull. Forgive me, Jupiter! When he said dead
I had almost shed a tear, but murder straight
Caused fiery rage to dry it up again.

Marcellan. The manner, good Marcellus, or by whom?

Marc. By Titus Martius.

All. The king!

Marc. Yes.[8]

Titus Traitor!

Marc. Tyrant!—He, 'twas he, grave lords,
That by damn'd feigned articles of peace
Conspired our general's ruin. To this truth
I here give up my body to more torments
Than can by man be thought on, and rejoice
To lose my life so meritoriously,
As to discover this black treachery.

Ruf. [*Apart.*] Beyond our wishes publish'd.

Titus. Villain, thy death shall be more terrible
Than ever time could pattern.

O. Tull. Except thine. [*Rises.*
Off with these robes of peace and clemency,
And let us hoop our aged limbs with steel,
And study tortures for this tyranny.

Marc. 'Tis needless, sir; vengeance is near at hand:
Lord Marius and Arimanus are conjoined,
And vow for their dear friend's untimely fall
To lay his palace level with the dust,
And kill the tyrant in the capitol,
In the very throne he has polluted so.

Ruf. Desperate traitors! See you now, dread sir,
This brood of vipers? Who can suffer this?

[8] *Yes, for an hour.*] The three last words are erased in the MS.

Leontius and Learchus, let's to arms!
Give us three leave, my liege: We'll raise such force
To guard Rome and your person,
That Marius and Armanus shall as soon
Grasp lightning as but touch a hair of you.

Leon. [*Aside.*] Excellent villain!—Oh that we were gone once.

Titus. Stir not. I do entreat you let 'em come.
If I be guilty of these practices,[9]
Let me with shame and horror suffer for't.
There's the arch-wreath; thus we disthrone ourself,
And, as a private man, will answer here
'Gainst all objections. Only let me crave
Sabinus may be sent for with all speed,
Who, dreadless in his articles, may come:
The law of arms does warrant him.

2 Sen. See it done.

Enter a Lictor.

Lict. Reverend lords,
There is a pilgrim sent from the Sabines,
That craves admittance into th' capitol.

Titus. Bring him with speed to th' senate.

Ruf. On my life,
Some strange confession of this stratagem
And penitent submission.

[9] *Practices.*] That is, insidious articles, or stratagems. So in Massinger's Parliament of Love:

——"I am informed
That he was apprehended by her *practice*,
And when he comes to trial for his life,
She'll rise up his accuser."

Enter SABINUS *in a Palmer's Habit, which he throws off; with a Postmaster.*

Sab. The gods of Rome protect ye.
All. Ha, Sabinus!
Sab. Yes. Do you wonder? Though a native love
Caused a transgression to regain our own,
We now are Titus' substitute, and come
In peace and duty to acknowledge it.
There is my warrant.
Titus. For thy death, damn'd rebel!
No warrant, nor no articles of mine.
From whom didst thou receive it?
Sab. What matters that? Suppose I have forgot,
There's thy own hand to witness it.
Titus. Thou art deceived, Sabinus; 'twas a trick
To train thee to the block; 'tis counterfeit;
Therefore, if thou hast hope of any mercy,
Confess from whom thou hadst it.
Sab. I shall disclose your plot if I talk thus.
Titus. Slave, what plot?
Sab. Young Tullius' murder; the caution, sir,
Of these sworn articles, delivered me
By this chief Postmaster, whom I have brought
To testify as much.
Ruf. Now we are caught: [*Aside.*
Hell and damnation strike him dumb for ever!
O. Tull. From whom received you this?
Postm. Oh, pardon—
Ruf. Peace, fearful slave!
Thou shalt not have the glory to pronounce it:—
It was from me.
Learch. Let us have part of it;—'twas from us three.
Ruf. It is confessed; give sentence. Ha, ha, ha!

Could you imagine, dotards, that our spirits
Could brook an upstart stripling to be borne
Up to the clouds with pomp, and we rejected,
But we would check your peacock?

Sen. Lictors, seize him. [*They are seized.*

Learch. Come, come, quick, dispatch:
Now we have reached the pitch of our desires,
'Tis hell to hold life longer.

M. Tull. [*Throwing off his Disguise.*] In that hell
Your conscience shall torment ye. 'On my knee
I beg that for their sentence.'

All Tullius!

Learch. Death now were heaven.

Ruf. What incantation's this?

O. Tull. O blessed metamorphosis!

Marcellan. This capitol appears a new Elysium.

M. Tull. Sacred sir, let me adore your goodness,
That are in all things so unmatchable.

Titus. Thy virtues make it so. Rise, Tullius,
And be thy own judge of these impious crimes.

M. Tull. The doom is passed already. If your grace
And favour will permit it, they shall live.

Titus. Live, Tullius?

M. Tull. Yes, dear sir;
Their own bloods cannot wash away their fact,
'Tis so infectious; but their conscience may,
Touched with this mercy, purge the sin away.

Titus. Thou still transcend'st in goodness: Have thy wish,
Let 'em still live, but never near the court.

Ruf.[3] The farther thence, the farther from my pain,

[3] This and the concluding speech are in the same hand-writing as the commencement of the play.

Parched Afric's desarts will more please than
Rome.
[*Exeunt* RUFINUS, LEARCHUS, *and* LEONTIUS.

Enter PHILADELPHA, MARIUS, LELIA, *and*
ARMANUS.

Titus. Welcome to thy husband's noble triumph,
Where he has vanquished his domestic foes,
As he has done his country's foes abroad.
Here, Tullius, take her, worthy of thy virtues,
And worthy the imperial seat of Rome,
When thou shalt gain her voices to be king,
As I foresee thou wilt. Marius, and Lelia too,
Enjoy the harvest of your ripened loves;
I have tried you all, and find you worthy favour;
For whilst I reign, on virtue will I smile,
And honour only with me still prevail. [*Exeunt.*

THE KNIGHT

OF

THE BURNING PESTLE.

THE

KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE.

This very admirable performance, which is certainly the most ancient specimen of burlesque comedy in the language, was first published in the year 1613,[1] with a dedication of the bookseller, which fortunately determines the date, though the former editors have all misconceived its writer's meaning; but it leaves us in the dark relative to the question whether Beaumont and Fletcher joined in the composition, or whether it was the work of one of them. Burre, in the beginning of his dedication, speaks of the *parents*, but afterwards mentions, more than once, the *father* in the singular case; and it is not improbable that in the former term he includes Robert Keysar, whom he calls the foster-father of the play, which was printed without any author's name. The second edition has, indeed, both names in the title-page; but the address to the reader speaks of a single author, and the last editors say, that the prologue does so likewise. The passage of the latter alluded to, the whole of which is verbally transcribed from a play of Lilly's, runs in the following words:—"We hope you will be

[1] The title-page of this very valuable edition is as follows:

"The Knight of The Burning Pestle.

————Quod si
Judicium subtile, videndis artibus illud
Ad libros et ad hæc musarum dona vocares:
Bœotum in crasso jurare aere natum.
Horat. in Epist. ad. Oct. Aug.

[Then a round circle, with the motto, *In Domino Confido.*] London: Printed for *Walter Burre*, and are to be sold at the Signe of the Crane, in Paul's Church-yard, 1613."

free from unkind reports, or mistaking the *authors* intention." It is evident that *authors* may either be the genitive case of the plural or of the singular;[2] and hence the authority is totally useless. We must therefore rest uncertain whether this satirical effusion was a joint production, though the authority for ascribing it to a single author, who is most likely to have been Fletcher, seems to be the stronger. With regard to the year in which the play was produced, we are assured by Walter Burre, in very strong terms, that it came into the world above a full year before the publication of Don Quixote, and as the first part of the latter appeared in 1605, the date of the comedy, if we admit the dedicator's authority, as hitherto explained, was 1604. The last editors mention some very reasonable doubts of the truth of this statement, but when they endeavour to prove their point at once, by informing us that we have no account of Heywood's Four Prentices of London, which is alluded to and ridiculed in it, till the year 1612, they only prove that they never condescended to look into that play. In the dedication of that drama "To the honest and high-spirited Prentices, the Readers," Heywood excuses the defect of the play which he published in 1612 in the following words:—" None but to you (as whom this play most especially concerns) I thought good to dedicate this labour; which, though written many years since, in my infancy of judgment in this kind of poetry, and my first practice, yet understanding (by what means I know not) it was in these more exquisite and refined times to come to the press in such a forwardness ere it came to my knowledge, that it was past prevention; and then knowing withal that it comes short of that accurateness both in plot and stile, that these more censorious days with greater curiosity acquire, I must thus excuse: that as plays were *then, some fifteen or sixteen years ago*, it was in the fashion." This throws back the date of the production of Heywood's play to the year 1596 or 1597, and indeed the whole tenor of it strongly reminds us of the dramatic performances of Kyd and Marlow, then in vogue. The other plays alluded to in the introduction are all of the more early period of the English stage, and that which bears the latest date (viz the second part of Heywood's If you know not me you know Nobody) was printed first in 1605, but probably acted some years before. From these circumstances, it will appear, that Walter Burre's assertion, as it was understood by Seward and the last editors, is so far not improbable; but there are other circumstances which render the precedence of Fletcher's play to Don Quixote in point of time very unlikely. In the first

[2] The editors have been guilty of the same mistake respecting the prologue to the Mad Lover, (see vol. IV. p. 135.)

place, the coincidences between the adventures of the hero of our authors and that of Cervantes are too striking to have been accidental, and the supposition of the latter having seen this drama is quite out of the question; whereas our poets, who understood Spanish, then a very fashionable language, probably read Don Quixote within a few years after its appearance. Indeed the very name of the play seems to be taken from the Knight of the Burning Shield, though no doubt our poets may have derived the appellation from some ancient romance, as Shakspeare probably did the epithet of the Knight of the Burning Lamp, which Falstaff bestows on Bardolph. But the following lines in the last act seem to convey so pointed an allusion to Banquo's ghost in Macbeth, that we may conjecture, with strong probability, that the present drama was produced subsequently to that tragedy, which Mr Malone and Mr Chalmers agree in placing in the year 1606, upon very plausible authority:—

"When thou art at thy table with thy friends,
Merry in heart, and filled with swelling wine,
I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
Invisible to all men but thyself,
And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear,
Shall make thee let the cup fall from thy hand,
And stand as mute and pale as death itself."[3]

An attentive consideration of Walter Burre's dedication proves, however, that when he asserted The Knight of the Burning Pestle to be elder than Don Quixote by a full year, he did not allude to the appearance of the original of the latter in Spain, which he was most probably utterly ignorant of, but to the publication of Shelton's translation in 1612. This ascertains the date of our drama to be the year 1611, and accordingly the publisher says that he had retained the copy, which he obtained from his patron soon after the original representation of the play, privately for two years, and this exactly corroborates the date above-mentioned, as he published it in 1613. I am gratified to state, that in this particular I have the satisfaction of coinciding in the opinion of Mr John Kemble, to whom this part of the present work is under peculiar obligations, as stated in the Introduction.

From the dedication to the first quarto, it appears that The Knight of the Burning Pestle was damned on its first appearance. It was probably the rage of the citizens, and particularly of the sturdy London apprentices, which condemned a production in

[3] In the first act a quotation occurs from Shakspeare's Henry IV., which supports the conjecture, that the above lines refer to Macbeth.

which they were so severely satirized. However, it was revived and acted with considerable success in subsequent periods. In 1635, the 28th February, it was presented at court, and at the Cock-pit in Drury-lane. In the same year a second quarto appeared, with the following title: "The Knight of the Burning Pestle. Full of Mirth and Delight. Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Gent. As it is now acted by her Majesties Servants at the Private House in Drury-lane, 1635. [Then the same motto from Horace as in the first quarto.] London: Printed by N. O. for J. S. 1635." In 1639 it was appropriated, with other plays, to the same theatre;[4] and, after the Restoration, was revived with a new prologue, spoken by Mrs Ellen Gwyn. Since the time of Langbaine it does not appear to have revisited the theatres.

The object of this burlesque drama, which was written in eight days, as Burre informs us, appears to be twofold: first, to expose the fashion of romance-reading, and the absurdities of the ancient heroic plays; and, secondly, to satirize the city. The play principally ridiculed in it is Heywood's Four Prentices of London, as first remarked by the historian of English Poetry, who, as well as a late reviewer, supposes that the latter is a mixture of the serious and burlesque, from which opinion I have ventured to dissent.[5] It may be observed, moreover, that most of the plays enumerated in the Induction[6] are by the same author, who at that time had not dignified his fame by such plays as A Woman Killed with Kindness, a Challenge for Beauty, or The English Traveller.[7]

[4] A curious allusion, which proves the popularity of the comedy at the time, occurs in Richard Brome's Sparagus Garden, first acted in 1635:—

"*Rebecca.* I long to see a play, and, above all plays, The Knight of the Burning —— What d'ye call't?

Monylacke. The Knight of the Burning Pestle.

Rebecca. Pestle is't? I thought of another thing, but I would fain see it. They say there's a grocer's boy kills a giant in it, and another little boy that does a citizen's wife the daintiliest—but I would fain see their best actor do me; I would so put him to't! They should find another thing of handling of me, I warrant 'em."

[5] See Warton's note at the beginning of the fourth act, and the editor's observations on it.

[6] Langbaine supposes the introduction of the citizen and his wife on the stage to be taken from Ben Jonson's Staple of News, which did not appear till twelve years after the publication of The Knight of the Burning Pestle, and in the very year of Fletcher's death.

[7] Sympson conceived a most strange notion, that "the keenest part of the satire" was levelled at Spenser, and that the play was suppressed for nine years, as he supposed, by means of Spenser's friends!

The other object of the present drama, mentioned above, was but too common at the time, particularly in those plays which were acted at the private houses, such as Blackfriars and the Cock-pit, or Drury-lane, where The Knight of the Burning Pestle was brought out. The larger theatres, such as the Fortune, and the Red Bull, where Heywood's Four Prentices was performed, seem to have been principally frequented by the citizens, who would, however, naturally have an eye upon any abuse bestowed upon them at the court-theatres, and to this jealousy The Knight of the Burning Pestle probably fell a sacrifice at its first representation.

DEDICATION

OF THE FIRST EDITION, 1613.

To his many ways endeared Friend Master Robert Keysar.

SIR,

This unfortunate child, who, in eight days, (as lately I have learned,) was begot and born, soon after was, by his parents, (perhaps, because he was so unlike his brethren,) exposed to the wide world, who, for want of judgment, or not understanding the privy mark of *irony* about it, (which showed it was no offspring of any vulgar brain,) utterly rejected it: so that, for want of acceptance, it was even ready to give up the ghost, and was in danger to have been smothered in perpetual oblivion, if you (out of your direct *antipathy* to ingratitude) had not been moved both to relieve and cherish it: wherein I must needs commend both your judgment, understanding, and singular love to good wits; You afterwards sent it to me, yet, being an infant and somewhat ragged, I have fostered it privately in my bosom these two years, and now, to show my love, return it to you, clad in good lasting clothes, which scarce memory will wear out, and able to speak for itself; and withal, as it telleth me, desirous to try his fortune in the world, where, if yet it be welcome, father, foster-father, nurse, and child, all have their desired end. If it be slighted or traduced, it hopes his father will beget him a younger brother, who shall revenge his quarrel, and challenge the world either of fond and merely literal interpretation, or illiterate misprision. Perhaps it will be thought of the race of *Don Quixote*; we both may confidently swear it is his elder above a year; and, therefore, may (by virtue of his birthright) challenge the wall of him. I doubt not but they will meet in their adventures, and I hope the breaking of one staff will make them friends; and perhaps they will combine themselves, and travel through the world to seek their adventures. So I commend him to his good fortune, and myself to your love. Your assured friend, W. B.

TO THE READERS OF THIS COMEDY.

[FROM THE SECOND EDITION, 1635.]

GENTLEMEN, the world is so nice in these our times, that for apparel there is no fashion; for music (which is a rare art, though now slighted) no instrument; for diet, none but the French kickshaws that are delicate; and for plays, no invention but that which now runneth an invective way, touching some particular persons, or else it is contemned before it is thoroughly understood. This is all that I have to say, that the author had no intent to wrong any one in this comedy; but, as a merry passage, here and there interlaced it with delight, which he hopes will please all, and be hurtful to none.

PROLOGUE,

FROM THE SECOND EDITION.

WHERE the bee can suck no honey, she leaves her sting behind; and where the bear cannot find *origanum* to heal his grief, he blasteth all the other leaves with his breath. We fear it is like to fare so with us; that, seeing you cannot draw from our labours sweet content, you leave behind you a sour mislike, and with open reproach blame our good meaning, because you cannot reap the wonted mirth. Our intent was at this time to move inward delight, not outward lightness; and to breed (if it might be) soft smiling, not loud laughing; knowing it, to the wise, to be a great pleasure to hear counsel mixed with wit, as to the foolish, to have sport mingled with rudeness. They were banished the theatre of Athens, and from Rome hissed, that brought parasites on the stage, with apish actions, or fools with uncivil habits, or courtezans with immodest words. We have endeavoured to be as far from unseemly speeches, to make your ears glow, as we hope you will be free from unkind reports, or mistaking the authors intention, who never aimed at any one particular in this play, to make our cheeks blush. And thus I leave it, and thee to thine own censure, to like or dislike. *Vale.*[1]

[1] *And thus I leave it*, &c.] These words seem more addressed to the *reader* than *spectator*, to whom this address rather would apply as an *epilogue*.—Ed. 1778.

This prologue is no other than a verbal transcript from the one prefixed to Lilly's Sappho and Phaon, the following passage being omitted: "The griffon never spreadeth her wings in the sun when she hath any sick feathers: Yet have we ventured to present our exercises before your judgments, when we know them full of weak matter, yielding rather ourselves to the courtesy which we have ever found, than to the preciseness which we ought to fear." As this prologue is not to be found in the first quarto, it was probably adopted from Lilly at the representation at court in 1633.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Speaker of the Prologue, }
The Citizen, } *sitting below amidst the*
The Citizen's Wife, } *spectators.*
Ralph, *his apprentice,* }
Venterwels, *a rich merchant, father of Luce.*[1]
Jasper, *his apprentice.*
Master Humphrey, *a friend to the merchant.*
Old Master Merrythought, *father of Jasper and Michael.*
Michael, *second son of Mistress Merrythought.*
Tim, *acting as squire* } *to Ralph.*
George, *acting as dwarf* }
Host.
Barber.
Tapster.
Three supposed Knights.
A Captain.
William Hamerton.
George Greengoose.
Sergeant.
Soldiers.
Boy, *that danceth and singeth.*

Luce, *the merchant's daughter, beloved of, and loving Jasper.*
Mistress Merrythought, *Jasper's mother.*
Woman *captive.*
Pompiona, *princess of Moldavia.*[2]

SCENE,—London, and the neighbouring Country, excepting Act IV. Scene II. where it is in Moldavia.

[1] *A rich merchant.*] The name of this character is mentioned to be Venterwels, and it has been thought better to distinguish him by it throughout.

[2] *Pompiona.*] This character, as well as some other inferior ones, has not hitherto been noticed in the list of the *dramatis personæ.*

THE KNIGHT

OF

THE BURNING PESTLE.

INDUCTION.

Enter Speaker of the Prologue. The Citizen, his Wife, and RALPH, *sitting below the Stage among the Spectators. Several Gentlemen sitting upon the Stage.*[1]

Prologue. *From all that's near the court, from all that's great*
Within the compass of the city-walls,
We now have brought our scene——

[1] *Several gentlemen sitting upon the stage.*] This stage direction, as well as that respecting the citizen and his wife and prentice, has been added, being evidently indicated by the context. The practice of accommodating gallants with seats on the stage, is often alluded to in old plays; and they commonly paid from sixpence to a shilling for a stool, according to the value of the seat. See The Woman-Hater, vol X. p. 23, and Malone's Historical Account of the English Stage (Shakspeare, 1803, vol. III. p. 79.) The expence even exceeded what is stated above, particularly at Black-

Citizen leaps upon the Stage.

Cit. Hold your peace, goodman boy!

Prol. What do you mean, sir?

Cit. That you have no good meaning: This seven years there hath been plays at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens; and now you call your play, "The London Merchant." Down with your title, boy, down with your title!

Prol. Are you a member of the noble city?

Cit. I am.

Prol. And a freeman?

Cit. Yea, and a grocer.

Prol. So, grocer; then, by your sweet favour, we intend no abuse to the city.

Cit. No, sir? yes, sir; if you were not resolved to play the Jacks,[2] what need you study for new subjects, purposely to abuse your betters? Why could not you be contented, as well as others, with the legend of Whittington,[3] or the Life and

friars, which appears to have been the most fashionable theatre. So, in the character of an Inns of Court-man, in The Young Gallant's Whirligig, by F. L. 1629. 4to, as quoted by Mr Haslewood:

> "The Cockpit heretofore would serve his wit,
> But now upon the Friar's stage he'll sit;
> It must be so, though this expensive fool
> Should pay an *angel* for a paltry stool."

[2] *If you were not resolved to play the* Jacks.] This seems to have been a proverbial expression at the time. It occurs in The Tempest, where Stephano says to Caliban—"Monster, your fairy, which you say is a harmless fairy, has done little better than *played the Jack* with us." Dr Johnson supposes the phrase to refer to Jack with a lanthorn, the *ignis fatuus*.

[3] *Whittington*, &c.] This play was probably never printed, but entered on the Stationers' Books, Feb. 8, 1604, with the following

Death of Sir Thomas Gresham, with the building of the Royal Exchange?[4] or the story of Queen Eleanor,[5] with the rearing of London-Bridge upon wool-sacks?

Prol. You seem to be an understanding man; what would you have us do, sir?

Cit. Why, present something notably in honour of the commons of the city.

Prol. Why, what do you say to the Life and Death of fat Drake, or the Repairing of Fleet Privies?[6]

Cit. I do not like that; but I will have a citizen, and he shall be of my own trade.

Prol. Oh, you should have told us your mind a month since; our play is ready to begin now.

Cit. 'Tis all one for that; I will have a grocer, and he shall do admirable things.

Prol. What will you have him do?

Cit. Marry, I will have him——

Wife. [*Below.*] Husband, husband!

title, "The History of Richard Whittington, of his lowe Byrthe, his great Fortune, as yt was plaied by the Prynce's Servants."

[4] *The Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham, with the building of the Royal Exchange.*] This is probably a sneer at a play of Thomas Heywood's, entitled "If you know not me you know Nobody. The second Part, with the Building of the Royal Exchange, and the famous Victory of Queen Elizabeth, Anno 1588." It was first printed in 1605, probably some years after the original representation.

[5] *The story of Queen Eleanor.*] Probably, "The Character of Edward the First, sirnamed Edward Longshanks, with his Return from the Holy Land; also the Life of Llewellin, Rebel in Wales; lastly, the sinking of Queen Eleanor at Charing-Cross, and rising again at Potter's Hithe, now named Queen Hithe," printed in 1593, and written by George Peele.

[6] *The Life and Death of fat Drake, or the Repairing of the Fleet Privies.*] This probably likewise refers to a contemporary play, though I have not met with any other allusion to it.

Ralph. [*Below.*] Peace, mistress!

Wife. Hold thy peace, Ralph; I know what I do, I warrant thee.—Husband, husband!

Cit. What say'st thou, cony?

Wife. Let him kill a lion with a Pestle, husband! let him kill a lion with a Pestle!

Cit. So he shall; I'll have him kill a lion with a Pestle.

Wife. Husband! shall I come up, husband?

Cit. Ay, cony.—Ralph, help your mistress this way—Pray, gentlemen, make her a little room. I pray you, sir, lend me your hand to help up my wife: I thank you, sir; so!

[*Wife comes upon the Stage.*

Wife. By your leave, gentlemen all! I'm something troublesome! I'm a stranger here; I was ne'er at one of these plays, as they say, before; but I should have seen Jane Shore[7] once; and

[7] *Jane Shore.*] Probably, "The first and second Parts of King Edward the Fourth, containing his merry Pastime with the Tanner of Tamworth, as also his Love to fair Mistresse *Shore*, her great Promotion, Fall, and Miserie, and, lastly, the lamentable Death of both her and her Husband, &c. as it hath divers Times been publickly played by the Right Honourable the Earle of Derbie his Servants." B. L. quarto.—*Reed.*

In the Stationers' Books, the following play is entered, June 19, 1594:—"An Enterlude, entitled The Tragedie of Richard the Third, wherein is showen the Death of Edwarde the Fourthe, with the Smotheringe of the twoo Princes in the Tower, with the lamentable End of Shore's Wife, and the Conjunction of the twoo Houses of Lancaster and York." An unique copy of this play is in the possession of George Chalmers, Esq. In Pimlico, or Runaway Redcap, printed in 1596, "the well-frequented play of Shore" is mentioned with Pericles, Prince of Tyre, as Mr Warton observes. Whether this is the same with the following remains to be ascertained. August 28, 1599, was entered, "The History of the Life and Death of Master Shore, and Jane Shore his Wife, as it was lately acted by the Earl Derbie his Servants." This is probably the second part of Edward IV., mentioned in Mr Reed's note, and written by Thomas Heywood, against whom the ridicule of

my husband hath promised me any time this twelvemonth, to carry me to the Bold Beauchamps,[8] but in truth he did not. I pray you bear with me.

Cit. Boy, let my wife and I have a couple of stools, and then begin; and let the grocer do rare things. [*Stools are brought, and they sit down.*

Prol. But, sir, we have never a boy to play him: Every one hath a part already.

Wife. Husband, husband, for God's sake, let Ralph play him:[9] Beshrew me, if I do not think he will go beyond them all.

Fletcher in this comedy is particularly levelled. It may, however, refer to *Jane Shore*, by Chettle and Day, acted at the Rose theatre in 1602.

[8] *The Bold Beauchamps.*] This was one of the ancient heroic plays, probably now lost. In Suckling's Goblins, the Poet mentions "the author of the *Bold Beauchamps*, and England's Joy." The latter was also a dramatic piece. The hero of the former was Thomas Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who is said to have fought in 1346, with an hundred men at arms at Hogges, in Normandy, and overthrown them, having only one squire and six archers in his company. His valour became so proverbial, that, *as bold as a Beauchamp*, became a phrase universally applied to a brave man. The date of the play is, in some measure, ascertained, as Mr Malone observes, from its being mentioned as contemporary with Faustus and Tamburlaine, which were exhibited in, or before, 1590, in Davenant's Playhouse to be Let.

[9] *Husband, husband, for God's sake, let Ralph play him.*] Ralph's character is a complete copy of the huffing idle apprentices of the time; and it may here be observed, that the general manner of satirizing the citizens of that period, and particularly those incorporated with the train-bands, did not so much consist in charging them with cowardice as in the eighteenth century; they are generally characterized, like Ralph, as sturdy and boisterous swaggerers, peevish and jealous, whenever they are contrasted with the courtiers, and, like their progeny in all subsequent ages, fond of staking their wealth against the high birth of their neighbours in Westminster. And it is not improbable that to this jealousy and mutual ridicule the extreme hatred of the Londoners to the cavaliers in the civil wars, may be at least partly ascribed.—Ralph is a direct travestie of Heywood's Eustace in The Four Prentices

Cit. Well remember'd, wife.—Come up, Ralph! I'll tell you, gentlemen; let them but lend him a suit of reparrel, and necessaries, and, by gad, if any of them all blow wind in the tail on him, I'll be hanged. [RALPH *comes on the Stage.*

Wife. I pray you, youth, let him have a suit of reparrel! I'll be sworn, gentlemen, my husband tells you true: He will act you sometimes at our house, that all the neighbours cry out on him; he will fetch you up a couraging part so in the gar-

of London, who thus complains of his master's not suffering him to indulge in the ancient privileges of a tradesman's apprentice:

" I cannot go to breakfast in a morning
With my kind mates and fellow-prentices,
But he cries, ' Eustace! One bid Eustace come!'
And my name Eustace is in every room.
If I might once a week but see a tilting,
Six days I'd fall unto my business close,
And ere the week's end win that idle day.
He will not let me see *a mustering*,
Nor in a *May-day morning fetch in May.*
I am no sooner got into the fencing-school,
To play a venie with some friend I bring,
But ' Eustace, Eustace!' all the street must ring.
He will not allow me one hour for sport!
I must not strike a foot-ball in the street,
But he will frown: Not view the dancing-school,
But he will miss me straight: Not suffer me
So much as take up cudgels in the street,
But he will chide: I must not go to buffets;
No, though I be provoked; that's the hell,
Were't not for this I could endure it well.".

The training of the citizens, and their May-festivities, are also sneered at in Barnabie Riche's Souldier's Wish to Britain's Welfare, or Captaine Skill and Captaine Pill, printed in 1604, as quoted by Mr Steevens: " *Skill.* God bless me, my countrey, and frendes, from his direction, that hath no better experience than what he hath atteyned unto at the *fetching home of a Maye-pole*, at a *Midsomer-fighte*, or from a *trayning at Mile-end-greene*."

ret, that we are all as feared I warrant you, that we quake again. We'll fear our children with him; if they be never so unruly, do but cry, "Ralph comes, Ralph comes," to them, and they'll be as quiet as lambs.—Hold up thy head, Ralph; shew the gentlemen what thou canst do; speak a huffing part; I warrant you the gentlemen will accept of it.

Cit. Do, Ralph, do.

Ralph. By Heaven, methinks,[1] it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the sea,
Where never fathom-line touch'd any ground,
And pluck up drowned honour from the lake of hell.

Cit. How say you, gentlemen, is it not as I told you?

Wife. Nay, gentlemen, he hath played before, my husband says, Musidorus,[2] before the wardens of our company.

[1] *By Heaven, methinks,* &c.] This speech (with very little variation) is taken from Shakspeare's first part of Henry IV.—Ed. 1778.

This passage of Shakspeare is, no doubt, one of the most liable to be ridiculed in the whole compass of his writings. Warton has quoted a passage from Cartwright's poem on Stokes's Art of Vaulting, and he supposes either that Shakspeare took the passage from some old bombast play, or that Cartwright meant to ridicule him, which is not at all unlikely, as he was of the Jonsonian school, and appears, from his verses on Fletcher, to have been no great admirer of Shakspeare, who, undoubtedly, produced the verses in question, intending them as characteristic of the impatient and furious Hotspur.

[2] *Musidorus.*] This play was printed in the year 1598, and afterwards in 1610, 1615, 1629, and 1668. The title to the edition of 1629 is the following: "A most pleasant Comedy of *Mucedo-*

Cit. Ay, and he should have played Jeronimo[3] with a shoemaker for a wager.

Prol. He shall have a suit of apparel, if he will go in.

Cit. In, Ralph, in, Ralph! and set out the grocery in their kind, if thou lovest me.

Wife. I warrant our Ralph will look finely when he's dress'd.

Prol. But what will you have it call'd?

Cit. "The Grocer's Honour."

Prol. Methinks "The Knight of the Burning Pestle" were better.

Wife. I'll be sworn, husband, that's as good a name as can be.

Cit. Let it be so; begin, begin; my wife and I will sit down.

Prol. I pray you do.

Cit. What stately music have you? you have shaums?[4]

Prol. Shaums? No.

Cit. No? I'm a thief if my mind did not give me so. Ralph plays a stately part, and he must needs have shaums: I'll be at the charge of them myself, rather than we'll be without them.

Prol. So you are like to be.

Cit. Why, and so I will be: There's two shil-

rus, the King's Sonne of Valentia, and Amadine, the King's Daughter of Aragon; with the merry Conceits of Mouse amplified, with new Additions, as it was acted before the King's Majesty at Whitehall, on Shrove-Sunday Night, by his Highnesse Servants usually playing at the Globe." In a volume now in the possession of Mr Garrick, and which formerly belonged to King Charles, this play is ascribed to Shakspeare.—Ed. 1778.

[3] *Jeronimo.*] See a note on The Chances, vol. VII. p. 107.

[4] *Shaums.*] Musical instruments mentioned in scripture, probably from *pseaume*, French for *psalms*, to which they were accompaniments. Some editions read, *shawnes*.—Ed. 1778.

lings; let's have the waits of Southwark! they are as rare fellows as any are in England, and that will fetch them all o'er the water, with a vengeance, as if they were mad.

Prol. You shall have them. Will you sit down then?

Cit. Ay.—Come, wife.

Wife. Sit you merry all, gentlemen; I'm bold to sit amongst you for my ease.

Prol. *From all that's near the court, from all that's great*
Within the compass of the city-walls,
We now have brought our scene: Fly far from hence
All private taxes, [all] immodest phrases,[5]
Whatever may but shew like vicious!
For wicked mirth never true pleasure brings,
But honest minds are pleased with honest things.—

Thus much for what we do; but, for Ralph's part, you must answer for yourself.[6]

Cit. Take you no care for Ralph; he'll discharge himself, I warrant you.

Wife. I'faith, gentlemen, I'll give my word for Ralph.

[5] *All private taxes, immodest phrases,*
Whate'er *may but shew*—] The variations were prescribed by an anonymous correspondent of Mr Sympson.—Ed. 1778.

"*All private taxes,*" in the first of these lines, means, "all private taskings," that is, any reflections on individuals.

[6] For *Ralph's part you must answer* for *yourself.*] I once thought that this latter *for* was to be struck out as redundant; but upon examination we shall find it not a redundancy, but a deficiency, and should read thus, *answer* for't *yourself.*—Sympson.

The old reading is easy, and correct enough for common conversation.—Ed. 1778.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Room in the House of Venterwels.

Enter VENTERWELS *and* JASPER.

Vent. Sirrah, I'll make you know you are my prentice,
And whom my charitable love redeem'd
Even from the fall of fortune; gave thee heat
And growth, to be what now thou art, new-cast thee;
Adding the trust of all I have, at home,
In foreign staples, or upon the sea,
To thy direction; tied the good opinions
Both of myself and friends to thy endeavours;
So fair were thy beginnings: But with these,
As I remember, you had never charge
To love your master's daughter; and even then
When I had found a wealthy husband for her;
I take it, sir, you had not: But, however,
I'll break the neck of that commission,
And make you know you're but a merchant's factor.

Jasp. Sir, I do liberally confess I am yours,
Bound both by love and duty to your service,
In which my labour hath been all my profit;
I have not lost in bargain, nor delighted
To wear your honest gains upon my back;
Nor have I given a pension to my blood,

Or lavishly in play consumed your stock:
These, and the miseries that do attend them,
I dare with innocence proclaim are strangers
To all my temperate actions. For your daughter,
If there be any love to my deservings
Borne by her virtuous self, I cannot stop it;
Nor am I able to refrain her wishes:
She is private to herself, and best of knowledge
Whom she will make so happy as to sigh for.
Besides, I cannot think you mean to match her
Unto a fellow of so lame a presence,
One that hath little left of nature in him.

Vent. 'Tis very well, sir; I can tell your wisdom
How all this shall be cured.

Jasp. Your care becomes you.

Vent. And thus it must be, sir: I here discharge you
My house and service; take your liberty;
And when I want a son I'll send for you. [*Exit.*

Jasp. These be the fair rewards of them that love.
Oh, you that live in freedom never prove
The travail of a mind led by desire!

Enter LUCE.

Luce. Why, how now, friend? struck with my father's thunder?

Jasp. Struck, and struck dead, unless the remedy
Be full of speed and virtue; I am, now,
What I expected long, no more your father's.

Luce. But mine?

Jasp. But yours, and only yours, I am;
That's all I have to keep me from the statute.
You dare be constant still?

Luce. Oh, fear me not!
In this I dare be better than a woman.
Nor shall his anger nor his offers move me,

Were they both equal to a prince's power.
  Jasp. You know my rival?
  Luce. Yes, and love him dearly;
Even as I love an ague, or foul weather:
I pr'ythee, Jasper, fear him not!
  Jasp. Oh, no;
I do not mean to do him so much kindness.
But to our own desires:[7] You know the plot
We both agreed on?
  Luce. Yes, and will perform
My part exactly.
  Jasp. I desire no more.
Farewell, and keep my heart; 'tis yours.
  Luce. I take it;
He must do miracles, makes me forsake it.
[*Exeunt.*

"*Cit.*[8] Fy upon 'em, little infidels! what a matter's here now? Well, I'll be hang'd for a halfpenny, if there be not some abomination knavery in this play. Well; let 'em look to't; Ralph must come, and if there be any tricks a-brewing—

"*Wife.* Let 'em brew and bake too, husband, a' God's name; Ralph will find all out, I warrant you, an they were older than they are.—I pray, my pretty youth, is Ralph ready?

"*Boy.* He will be presently.

"*Wife.* Now, I pray you, make my commendations unto him, and withal, carry him this stick of liquorice; tell him his mistress sent it him;

[7] *But to our own* desires.] Probably *designs.*—Ed. 1778.
The text is perfectly right, being accordant with the language of the age, and meaning, "to what we ourselves desire to consummate."

[8] To distinguish the speeches of the supposed spectators from those of the real *dramatis personæ,* they are now included in inverted commas.

and bid him bite a piece; 'twill open his pipes the better, say." [*Exit Boy*.

Enter VENTERWELS *and Master* HUMPHREY.

Vent. Come, sir, she's yours; upon my faith, she's yours;
You have my hand: for other idle lets,[9]
Between your hopes and her, thus with a wind
They are scattered, and no more. My wanton prentice,
That like a bladder blew himself with love,
I have let out, and sent him to discover
New masters yet unknown.
Hum. I thank you, sir,
Indeed I thank you, sir; and, ere I stir,
It shall be known, however you do deem,
I am of gentle blood, and gentle seem.
Vent. Oh, sir, I know it certain.
Hum. Sir, my friend,
Although, as writers say, all things have end,
And that we call a pudding hath his two,
Oh, let it not seem strange, I pray to you,
If in this bloody simile I put
My love, more endless than frail things or gut.

" *Wife*. Husband, I pr'ythee, sweet lamb, tell me one thing; but tell me truly.—Stay, youths, I beseech you, till I question my husband.

" *Cit*. What is it, mouse?

" *Wife*. Sirrah, didst thou ever see a prettier child? how it behaves itself, I warrant ye! and speaks and looks, and perts up the head! I pray you, brother, with your favour, were you never none of Master Moncaster's scholars?[1]

[9] *Lets*.] *i. e.* Hindrances.

[1] *Were you never none of Master* Moncaster's *scholars*.] We should read Mulcaster, who was master of Merchant Taylor's school since its original institution in 1561.

" *Cit.* Chicken, I pr'ythee heartily contain thyself; the childer are pretty childer; but when Ralph comes, lamb——

" *Wife.* Ay, when Ralph comes, cony!—Well, my youth, you may proceed."

Vent. Well, sir; you know my love, and rest, I hope,
Assured of my consent; get but my daughter's,
And wed her when you please. You must be bold,
And clap in close unto her; come, I know
You have language good enough to win a wench.

" *Wife.* A whoreson tyrant! 'hath been an old stringer[a] in his days, I warrant him!"

Hum. I take your gentle offer, and withal
Yield love again for love reciprocal.

Vent. What, Luce! within there!

Enter Luce.

Luce. Call'd you, sir?

Vent. I did;
Give entertainment to this gentleman;
And see you be not froward.—To her, sir!
My presence will but be an eye-sore to you.
[*Exit.*

Hum. Fair mistress Luce, how do you? are you well?
Give me your hand, and then I pray you tell
How doth your little sister, and your brother?
And whether you love me or any other?

Luce. Sir, these are quickly answered.

Hum. So they are,
Where women are not cruel. But how far

[a] — *hath been an old* stringer.] A phrase similar to *striker*, denoting a wencher.

Is it now distant from the place we are in,
Unto that blessed place, your father's warren?
Luce. What makes you think of that, sir?
Hum. Even that face;
For stealing rabbits whilome in that place,
God Cupid, or the keeper, I know not whether,
Unto my cost and charges brought you thither,
And there began——
Luce. Your game, sir?
Hum. Let no game,
Or any thing that tendeth to the same,
Be ever more remember'd, thou fair killer,
For whom I sate me down and brake my tiller.[3]

"*Wife.* There's a kind gentleman, I warrant you; when will you do as much for me, George?"

Luce. Beshrew me, sir, I'm sorry for your losses;
But, as the proverb says, 'I cannot cry;'
I would you had not seen me!
Hum. So would I,
Unless you had more maw to do me good.
Luce. Why, cannot this strange passion[4] be withstood?
Send for a constable, and raise the town.
Hum. Oh, no, my valiant love will batter down
Millions of constables, and put to flight
Even that great watch of Midsummer-day at night.[5]

[3] *Tiller.*] See a note on Philaster, vol. X. p. 164. This passage proves that the *tiller* there mentioned was a steeler, or steel-bow, as Theobald conjectured.

[4] *This strange passion.*] Sympson says, "To send for a *constable and raise a town*, to withstand a STRANGE *passion*, borders seemingly near upon nonsense;" he would therefore read, STRONG *passion*: But we see no reason why she may not go from one metaphor to another.—Ed. 1778.

[5] *That great watch of Midsummer-day at night.*] What is allu-

Luce. Beshrew me, sir, 'twere good I yielded then;
Weak women cannot hope, where valiant men
Have no resistance.
Hum. Yield then; I am full
Of pity, though I say it, and can pull
Out of my pocket thus a pair of gloves.
Look, Lucy, look; the dog's tooth, nor the dove's,
Are not so white as these; and sweet they be,
And whipt about with silk, as you may see.
If you desire the price, shoot from your eye
A beam to this place, and you shall espy
F S, which is to say, my sweetest honey,
They cost me three and two-pence, or no money.[6]
Luce. Well, sir, I take them kindly, and I thank you:
What would you more?
Hum. Nothing.
Luce. Why then, farewell!

ded to here is probably the following custom: On the vigil of St John the Baptist, it was formerly usual, after sun-setting, for the principal citizens to make bonfires before their doors, and also to set out tables furnished with meat and drink, of which they invited their neighbours and passengers to partake. At the same time a marching watch, consisting of about 2000 men, furnished with lights, perambulated from St Paul's Gate to Aldgate, and back again, when they broke up. Part of this watch was provided at the expence of the city of London, and other part of the several parishes. The custom continued until the time of Henry VIII. when it was prohibited by him. In 1548 it was again revived; but being found to be the means of collecting disorderly people together, and occasioning great riots, it was, in the year 1569, laid aside, and has ever since been discontinued. See Stow's Survey.—*Reed.*

[6] *They cost me three and two-pence or no money.*] These gloves are very cheap when compared with some worn at the time. See vol. X. p. 84.

Hum. Nor so, nor so; for, lady, I must tell,
Before we part for what we met together;
God grant me time, and patience, and fair weather!

Luce. Speak, and declare your mind in terms so brief.

Hum. I shall; then first and foremost, for relief
I call to you, if that you can afford it;
I care not at what price, for on my word, it
Shall be repaid again, although it cost me
More than I'll speak of now; for love hath toss'd me
In furious blanket like a tennis-ball,
And now I rise aloft, and now I fall.

Luce. Alas, good gentleman, alas the day!

Hum. I thank you heartily; and, as I say,
Thus do I still continue without rest,
I' th' morning like a man, at night a beast,
Roaring and bellowing mine own disquiet,
That much I fear, forsaking of my diet
Will bring me presently to that quandary,
I shall bid all adieu.

Luce. Now, by St Mary,
That were great pity!

Hum. So it were, beshrew me;
Then ease me, lusty Luce, and pity shew me.

Luce. Why, sir, you know my will is nothing worth
Without my father's grant; get his consent,
And then you may with [full] assurance try me.[7]

Hum. The worshipful your sire will not deny me;
For I have ask'd him, and he hath replied,

[7] *You may with assurance try me.*] The measure assisted by Sympson.—Ed. 1778.

'Sweet master Humphrey, Luce shall be thy bride.'

Luce. Sweet master Humphrey, then I am content.

Hum. And so am I, in truth.

Luce. Yet take me with you;
There is another clause must be annex'd,
And this it is: I swore, and will perform it,
No man shall ever 'joy me as his wife,
But he that stole me hence: If you dare venture,
I'm yours (you need not fear; my father loves you)
If not, farewell for ever!

Hum. Stay, nymph, stay!
I have a double gelding, colour'd bay,
Sprung by his father from Barbarian kind;
Another for myself, though somewhat blind,
Yet true as trusty tree.

Luce. I'm satisfied;
And so I give my hand. Our course must lie
Through Waltham-Forest, where I have a friend
Will entertain us. So farewell, Sir Humphrey,
And think upon your business! [*Exit* LUCE.

Hum. Though I die,
I am resolved to venture life and limb,
For one so young, so fair, so kind, so trim.
[*Exit* HUMPHREY.

" *Wife.* By my faith and troth, George, and as I am virtuous, it is e'en the kindest young man that ever trod on shoe-leather. Well, go thy ways; if thou hast her not, 'tis not thy fault, 'faith.

" *Cit.* I pr'ythee, mouse, be patient! a' shall have her, or I'll make some of 'em smoke for't.

" *Wife.* That's my good lamb, George. Fy! this

stinking tobacco[9] kills men![1] 'would there were none in England! Now I pray, gentlemen, what good does this stinking tobacco do you? nothing, I warrant you; make chimnies a' your faces!"

SCENE II.

A Grocer's Shop.

Enter RALPH, *like a Grocer, with two Apprentices, reading Palmerin of England.*[2]

"*Wife.* Oh, husband, husband, now, now! there's Ralph, there's Ralph."

[9] *Tobacco.*] At the time our authors wrote, (we learn from Prynne, in his Histriomastix, p. 322,) *tobacco*, wine, and beer, were the usual accommodations in the theatre, as the two latter are still at Sadler's Wells. See also Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry, vol. I.—*Reed.*

The passage in Prynne is curious:—"How many are there, who, according to their several qualities, spend 2d. 3d. 4d. 6d. 12d. 18d. 2s. and sometimes four or five shillings, at a playhouse, day by day, if coach-hire, boate-hire, *tobacco*, wine, beer, and such like vaine expences, which playhouses do usually occasion, be cast into the reckoning." All these sums, excepting the last, were prices of admission to the several parts of the different playhouses.

[1] *Kills* men.] Sympson reads, *kills* ME, and I suspect he is right; but the old text affording sense must be retained.

[2] *Palmerin of England.*] From the next note it will be seen that this is a mistake, as Ralph reads out of Palmerin de Oliva; but this must either be an inadvertence of the author, or an intentional mistake, as Palmerin of England is again mentioned on the next page but one.

"*Cit.* Peace, fool! let Ralph alone.—Hark you, Ralph; do not strain yourself too much at the first. Peace! Begin Ralph."

Ralph. [Reads.] *Then Palmerin and Trineus,*[3] *snatching their lances from their dwarfs, and clasping their helmets, gallop'd amain after the giant; and Palmerin having gotten a sight of him, came posting amain, saying, 'Stay, traiterous thief! for thou mayst not so carry away her, that is worth the greatest lord in the world;' and, with these words, gave him a blow on the shoulder, that he struck him besides his elephant. And Trineus coming to the knight that had Agricola behind him, set him soon besides his horse, with his neck broken in the fall; so that the princess getting out of the throng, between joy and grief, said, 'All happy knight, the mirror of all such as follow arms, now may I be well assured of the love thou bearest me.'* I wonder why the kings do not raise an army of fourteen or fifteen hundred thousand men, as big as the army that the prince of Portigo brought against Rosicler,[4]

[3] *Then Palmerin and Trineus,* &c.] This passage is taken, with some slight variations, from "Palmerin D'Oliva, the Mirrour of Nobilitie, Mappe of Honor, Anatomie of Rare Fortunes, Heroycall President of Love, Wonder of Chivalrie, and most accomplished Knight in all Perfections." 4to. 1588. B. L. p. 131.—*Reed.*

The popularity of this romance seems to have been very extensive. So in Marston's Dutch Courtezan: "You are grown a proud, scurvy, apish, idle, disdainful, scoffing Godsfoot, because you have read Euphues and his England, *Palmerin de Oliva,* and the Legend of Lies." The latter is the Golden Legend, often denominated so by the protestants of the time.

[4] *As big as the army that the Prince of Portigo brought against Rosicler.*] These were characters in the celebrated *Espcio de Caballerias,* one of the romances condemned by the curate in Don Quixote to the flames. The first part, consisting of two books, and written by Diego Ortunez, was printed in 1562. A second part, also divided into two books, by Pedro de la Sierra, was published in

and destroy these giants; they do much hurt to wandering damsels, that go in quest of their knights.

"*Wife.* 'Faith, husband, and Ralph says true; for they say the king of Portugal cannot sit at his meat, but the giants and the ettins[5] will come and snatch it from him.

"*Cit.* Hold thy tongue.—On, Ralph!"

Ralph. And certainly those knights are much to be commended, who, neglecting their possessions, wander with a squire and a dwarf through the desarts, to relieve poor ladies.

"*Wife.* Ay, by my faith are they, Ralph; let 'em say what they will, they are indeed. Our knights neglect their possessions well enough, but they do not the rest."

Ralph. There are no such courteous and fair well-spoken knights in this age: They will call one the *son of a whore*, that Palmerin of England would have called *fair sir;* and one that Rosicler

1580. The third and fourth parts, each consisting of two books, were written by Marcos Martinez. The whole work was translated into English in nine parts, the last printed in 1602, with the title of The Mirrour of Knighthood.

[5] *Ettins.*] The good woman is here a little tautological, as at other times she is nonsensical, (unless I mistake her meaning in this place,) for giants and *ettins*, or *etins*, are giants and giants, *eten* in Saxon signifying so.—*Sympson.*

Ettins, quasi *heathens;* it is not probable she thought of *Saxon.* —Ed. 1778.

I believe that *ettins* is a corruption of *elfins*, which signifies fairies, owing either to an error of the press, or an intention of the authors to make her blunder.—*Mason.*

This is a strange specimen of the ignorance of the last editors and of Mason. Sympson's conjecture is perfectly right. The term *etin* for a giant was very common. In the Complaint of Scotland, among other stories told by the shepherds, we have The *Red Etin* of Ireland. The word occurs in Cotton's Lucian, or the Scoffer Scoffed, and in other works.

would have called *right beauteous damsel*, they will call *damn'd bitch*.

"*Wife*. I'll be sworn will they, Ralph; they have called me so an hundred times, about a scurvy pipe of tobacco."

Ralph. But what brave spirit could be content to sit in his shop, with a flapet of wood, and a blue apron before him, selling Methridatam and dragons' water to visited houses,[6] that might pursue feats of arms, and, through his noble achievements, procure such a famous history to be written of his heroic prowess?

"*Cit*. Well said, Ralph; some more of those words, Ralph!

"*Wife*. They go finely, by my troth."

Ralph. Why should not I then pursue this course, both for the credit of myself and our company? for amongst all the worthy books of atchievements, I do not call to mind that I yet read of a Grocer-Errant: I will be the said Knight.—Have you heard of any that hath wandered unfurnished of his squire and dwarf? My elder prentice Tim shall be my trusty squire, and little George my dwarf. Hence, my blue apron! Yet, in remembrance of my former trade, upon my shield shall be pourtrayed a Burning Pestle,[7] and I will be called the Knight of the Burning Pestle.

[6] *Selling Methridatam and dragons' water to visited houses.*] That is, to houses visited by the plague; Mithridate is well known to have been a composition of a vast variety of herbs, supposed to be a preservative against poison and the plague. The receipt for making it may be found in the old dispensatories. Dragons' water is a ludicrous mistake for dragons' blood, which, as Cotgrave informs us, "is not, as the ignorant imagine, the bloud of a dragon crushed to death by an elephant, but the gumme of the dragon-tree, opened or bruised in the dog-daies."

[7] *Yet, in remembrance of my former trade, upon my shield shall*

" *Wife.* Nay, I dare swear thou wilt not forget thy old trade; thou wert ever meek."

Ralph. Tim!

Tim. Anon.

Ralph. My beloved squire, and George my dwarf, I charge you that from henceforth you never call me by any other name, but the *Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle*; and that you never call any female by the name of a woman or wench, but *fair lady*, if she have her desires; if not, *distressed damsel*; that you call all forests and heaths, *desarts*, and all horses, *palfries!*

" *Wife.* This is very fine!—'Faith, do the gentlemen like Ralph, think you, husband?

" *Cit.* Ay, I warrant thee; the players would give all the shoes in their shop for him."

Ralph My beloved squire Tim, stand out: Admit this were a desart, and over it a knight-errant pricking,[8] and I should bid you enquire of his intents, what would you say?

Tim. 'Sir, my master sent me to know whither you are riding?'

Ralph. No! thus; 'Fair sir! the *Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle* commanded me to enquire upon what adventure you are bound, whether to relieve some distressed damsels, or otherwise.'

" *Cit.* Whoreson blockhead cannot remember!

" *Wife.* I'faith, and Ralph told him on't before; all the gentlemen heard him; did he not, gentlemen? did not Ralph tell him on't?"

be pourtrayed a Burning Pestle.] This is in ridicule of Eustace, in Heywood's Four Prentices of London, bearing the grocer's arms upon his shield.

[8] *Pricking.*] i. e. *Riding. A gentle knight was* pricking *on the plain*, is the first line of Spenser's Fairy Queen.—Ed. 1778.

George. *Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle*, here is a distressed damsel, to have a halfpenny-worth of pepper.

" *Wife*. That's a good boy! see, the little boy can hit it; by my troth, it's a fine child."

Ralph. Relieve her, with all courteous language.
Now shut up shop; no more my 'prentice, but
My trusty squire and dwarf. I must bespeak
My shield, and arming Pestle.

" *Cit*. Go thy ways, Ralph! As I am a true man,[9] thou art the best on 'em all.

" *Wife*. Ralph, Ralph!

" *Ralph*. What say you, mistress?

" *Wife*. I pr'ythee come again quickly, sweet Ralph.

" *Ralph*. Bye-and-bye." [*Exit*.

SCENE III.

A Room in Merrythought's *House*.

Enter JASPER *and Mrs* MERRYTHOUGHT.

Mrs Mer. Give thee my blessing? No, I'll ne'er give thee my blessing; I'll see thee hang'd

[9] *As I am a true man.*] That is, an honest man, generally used in opposition to thief. For instance, in Middleton's Mayor of Quinborough—

——— " An insatiate *thief*,
That scarce believes he has all, though he has stripped
The *true man* naked."

first; it shall ne'er be said I gave thee my blessing: Thou art thy father's own son, of the right blood of the Merrythoughts; I may curse the time that e'er I knew thy father; he hath spent all his own, and mine too, and when I tell him of it, he laughs and dances, and sings, and cries, 'A merry heart lives long-a.' And thou art a waste-thrift, and art run away from thy master, that loved thee well, and art come to me; and I have laid up a little for my younger son Michael, and thou think'st to 'bezzle that, but thou shalt never be able to do it.

Enter MICHAEL.

Come hither, Michael; come, Michael; down on thy knees: Thou shalt have my blessing.

Mich. [*Kneels.*] I pray you, mother, pray to God to bless me!

Mrs Mer. God bless thee! but Jasper shall never have my blessing; he shall be hanged first, shall he not, Michael? how sayst thou?

Mich. Yes, forsooth, mother, and grace of God.

Mrs Mer. That's a good boy!

" *Wife.* I'faith, it's a fine spoken child!"

Jasp. Mother, though you forget a parent's love,
I must preserve the duty of a child.
I ran not from my master, nor return
To have your stock maintain my idleness.

" *Wife.* Ungracious child, I warrant him! hark, how he chops logic with his mother: Thou hadst best tell her she lies; do, tell her she lies.

" *Cit.* If he were my son, I would hang him up by the heels, and flea him, and salt him, whoreson halter-sack!"[1]

[1] *Halter-sack.*] A term equivalent to gallows bird. It occurs

Jasp. My coming only is to beg your love,
Which I must ever, though I never gain it;
And, howsoever you esteem of me,
There is no drop of blood hid in these veins,
But I remember well belongs to you,
That brought me forth, and would be glad for you
To rip them all again, and let it out.

Mrs Mer. I'faith, I had sorrow enough for thee (God knows;) but I'll hamper thee well enough.—Get thee in, thou vagabond, get thee in, and learn of thy brother Michael.

Mer. [Singing within.] *Nose, nose, jolly red nose,*
And who gave thee this jolly red nose?

Mrs Mer. Hark, my husband! he's singing and hoiting; and I'm fain to cark and care,[2] and all little enough.—Husband! Charles! Charles Merrythought!

Enter Old Merrythought.

Mer. [Singing.] *Nutmegs and ginger, cinnamon, and cloves;*
And they gave me this jolly red nose.

Mrs Mer. If you would consider your state, you would have little lust to sing, I wis.

Mer. It should never be considered, while it were an estate, if I thought it would spoil my singing.

again in King and No King, and in Four Plays in One, vol. XI. p. 28, where Seward would read *halter-sick*.

[2] *Cark and care.*] These words, the former of which is now obsolete, are nearly synonymous.

Mrs Mer. But how wilt thou do, Charles? thou art an old man, and thou canst not work, and thou hast not forty shillings left, and thou eatest good meat, and drinkest good drink, and laughest.

Mer. And will do.

Mrs Mer. But how wilt thou come by it, Charles?

Mer. How? Why, how have I done hitherto these forty years? I never came into my dining-room, but, at eleven and six o'clock, I found excellent meat and drink o' th' table;[3] my clothes were never worn out, but next morning a taylor brought me a new suit; and without question it will be so ever! Use makes perfectness; if all should fail, it is but a little straining myself extraordinary, and laugh myself to death.

[3] *I never came into my dining-room, but, at eleven and six o'clock, I found excellent meat and drink o' th' table.*] These were the dinner and supper hours of our ancestors, when this play was written. The latter is again mentioned in act IV. sc. IV., and both in The Case is altered, by Ben Jonson. See also the Woman-Hater, vol. X. pp. 16, 43. Afterwards the hours became gradually later. So in Mayne's Amorous War, 1648:—

> " 'Troth, I should like the camp well, if the fields
> Did bring forth feather-beds; or if the streams,
> Like those o' th' golden age, did run pure wine;
> Or if our meals would every *twelve and seven*
> Observe due hours."

The same dinner hour is mentioned in Middleton and Rowley's Changeling:—

" *Alib.* What hour is't, Lollio?

Lol. Towards belly hour, sir.

Alib. Dinner time? thou mean'st twelve a clock.

Lol. Yes, sir, for every part has his hour; we wake at six and look about us, that's eye-hour; at seven we should pray, that's knee-hour; at eight walk, that's leg-hour; at nine gather flowers, and pluck a rose, that's nose-hour; at ten we drink, that's mouth-hour; at eleven lay about us for victuals, that's hand-hour; at twelve go to dinner, that's belly-hour."

"*Wife.* It's a foolish old man this; is not he, George?

"*Cit.* Yes, cony——

"*Wife.* Give me a penny i' th' purse while I live, George.

"*Cit.* Ay, by'r lady, cony, hold thee there!"

Mrs Mer. Well, Charles; you promised to provide for Jasper, and I have laid up for Michael: I pray you pay Jasper his portion; he's come home, and he shall not consume Michael's stock; he says his master turned him away, but I promise you truly I think he ran away.

"*Wife.* No, indeed, mistress Merrythought, though he be a notable gallows, yet I'll assure you his master did turn him away, even in this place; 'twas, i'faith, within this half-hour, about his daughter; my husband was by.

"*Cit.* Hang him, rogue! he served him well enough: Love his master's daughter? By my troth, cony, if there were a thousand boys, thou wouldst spoil them all, with taking their parts; let his mother alone with him.

"*Wife.* Ay, George, but yet truth is truth."

Mer. Where is Jasper? he's welcome, however. Call him in; he shall have his portion. Is he merry?

Mrs M. Ay, foul chive him,[4] he is too merry. Jasper! Michael!

[4] *Foul chive him.*] *Chive him* may be a Somersetshire contraction for *shall have him.* However, it is possibly a separate word, and connected with *cheven,* which occurs in the ballad of Robin Hood and the Stranger, and is left as a desideratum by Ritson. Robin Hood having invited the Stranger to join his band of outlaws, the latter answers,

Enter JASPER *and* MICHAEL.

Mer. Welcome, Jasper! though thou runn'st away, welcome! God bless thee! 'Tis thy mother's mind thou shouldst receive thy portion; thou hast been abroad, and I hope hast learn'd experience enough to govern it; thou art of sufficient years; hold thy hand: One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, there is ten shillings for thee; thrust thyself into the world with that, and take some settled course: If Fortune cross thee, thou hast a retiring place; come home to me; I have twenty shillings left. Be a good husband; that is, wear ordinary clothes, eat the best meat, and drink the best drink; be merry, and give to the poor, and, believe me, thou hast no end of thy goods.

Jasp. Long may you live free from all thought of ill,
And long have cause to be thus merry still!
But, father——

Mer. No more words, Jasper; get thee gone! Thou hast my blessing; thy father's spirit upon thee! Farewell, Jasper!

But yet, or ere you part (oh, cruel!)
Kiss me, kiss me, sweeting, mine own dear jewel!

So; now begone; no words! [*Exit* JASPER.

Mrs Mer. So, Michael; now get thee gone too.

"Go play the *cheven*, the stranger said,
Make haste and quickly go,
Or with my fist, be sure of this,
I'll give thee buffets sto'."

Mich. Yes, forsooth, mother; but I'll have my father's blessing first.

Mrs Mer. No, Michael; 'tis no matter for his blessing; thou hast my blessing; be gone. I'll fetch my money and jewels, and follow thee · I'll stay no longer with him, I warrant thee.—Truly, Charles, I'll be gone too.

Mer. What! you will not?

Mrs Mer. Yes, indeed will I.

Mer. [Sings.] *Hey-ho, farewell, Nan!*
I'll never trust wench more again, if I can.

Mrs Mer. You shall not think (when all your own is gone) to spend that I have been scraping up for Michael.

Mer. Farewell, good wife! I expect it not; all I have to do in this world, is to be merry; which I shall, if the ground be not taken from me; and if it be, [*Sings.*

When earth and seas from me are reft,
The skies aloft for me are left. [Exeunt.

FINIS ACTUS PRIMI.

"*Wife.* I'll be sworn he's a merry old gentleman, for all that. Hark, hark, husband, hark! fiddles, fiddles! [*Music.*] now surely they go finely. They say 'tis present death for these fiddlers to tune their rebecks[5] before the great Turk's

[5] *Rebecks.*] A *rebeck* was an instrument with three strings, resembling a modern fiddle.—*Reed.*

Ritson quotes the text to prove that rebecks and fiddles were synonymous; but it is probable that the former was a particular species of the latter. (*Ancient Songs*, p. xliv.)

grace; is't not, George? [*Boy danceth.*] But look, look! here's a youth dances![6] now, good youth, do a turn o' th' toe. Sweetheart, i'faith I'll have Ralph come and do some of his gambols; he'll ride the wild-mare,[7] gentlemen, 'twould do your hearts good to see him. I thank you, kind youth; pray bid Ralph come.

" *Cit.* Peace, cony!—Sirrah, you scurvy boy, bid the players send Ralph; or, by God's wounds, an they do not, I'll tear some of their perriwigs beside their heads; this is all riff-raff."

6 *Here's a youth dances.*] This appears to have been a frequent practice in the ancient theatres to amuse the audience between the acts. The same practice prevailed on the Spanish stage of the seventeenth century.

7 *Ride the wild-mare.*] A game which seems to have been popular at the time. See vol. V. p. 309. It is also mentioned in the works of the facetious Ned Ward.

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Room in the House of Venterwels.

Enter VENTERWELS *and Master* HUMPHREY.

Vent. And how, i'faith, how goes it now, son Humphrey?
Hum. Right worshipful, and my beloved friend
And father dear, this matter's at an end.
Vent. 'Tis well; it should be so: I'm glad the girl
Is found so tractable.
Hum. Nay, she must whirl
From hence, (and you must wink; for so, I say,
The story tells) to-morrow before day.

" *Wife.* George, dost thou think in thy conscience now 'twill be a match? tell me but what thou think'st, sweet rogue: Thou seest the poor gentleman (dear heart!) how it labours and throbs, I warrant you, to be at rest: I'll go move the father for't.

" *Cit.* No, no; I pr'ythee sit still, honey-suckle; thou'lt spoil all: If he deny him, I'll bring half-a-dozen good fellows myself, and in the shutting of an evening knock it up, and there's an end.

" *Wife.* I'll buss thee for that, i'faith, boy! Well, George, well, you have been a wag in your days, I warrant you; but God forgive you, and I do with all my heart."

Vent. How was it, son? you told me that to-morrow
Before day-break, you must convey her hence.
Hum. I must, I must; and thus it is agreed:
Your daughter rides upon a brown-bay steed,
I on a sorrel, which I bought of Brian,
The honest host of the red roaring Lion,
In Waltham situate: Then if you may,
Consent in seemly sort; lest by delay,
The fatal sisters come, and do the office,
And then you'll sing another song.
Vent. Alas,
Why should you be thus full of grief to me,
That do as willing as yourself agree
To any thing, so it be good and fair?
Then steal her when you will, if such a pleasure
Content you both; I'll sleep and never see it,
To make your joys more full. But tell me why
You may not here perform your marriage?

"*Wife.* God's blessing o' thy soul, old man! i'faith, thou art loth to part true hearts. I see a' has her, George; and I'm as glad on't!—Well, go thy ways, Humphrey, for a fair-spoken man; I believe thou hast not thy fellow within the walls of London; an I should say the suburbs too, I should not lie. Why dost not rejoice with me, George?

"*Cit.* If I could but see Ralph again, I were as merry as mine host, i'faith."

Hum. The cause you seem to ask, I thus declare:
(Help me, oh, muses nine!) Your daughter sware
A foolish oath, the more it was the pity;
Yet no one but myself[8] within this city

[8] *Yet* none *but myself.*] The reading in the text is Theobald's. Sympson's anonymous correspondent proposes, *None but* I *myself.*—Ed. 1778.

Shall dare to say so, but a bold defiance
Shall meet him, were he of the noble science.[9]
And yet she sware, and yet why did she swear?
Truly I cannot tell, unless it were
For her own ease; for sure sometimes an oath,
Being sworn thereafter, is like cordial broth:
And this it was she swore, never to marry,
But such a one whose mighty arm could carry
(As meaning me, for I am such a one)
Her bodily away, through stick and stone,
Till both of us arrive, at her request,
Some ten miles off, in the wild Waltham-Forèst.

Vent. If this be all, you shall not need to fear
Any denial in your love; proceed;
I'll neither follow, nor repent the deed.

Hum. Good night, twenty good nights, and twenty more,
And twenty more good nights, that makes three-score! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Night. Waltham Forest.

Enter Mrs MERRYTHOUGHT *and* MICHAEL.

Mrs Mer. Come, Michael; art thou not weary, boy?

Mich. No, forsooth, mother, not I.

9 —— *were he of the* noble science.] Meaning the noble science of defence; a master of fencing. See vol. XIII. p. 421.—*Mason.*

Mrs Mer. Where be we now, child?

Mich. Indeed, forsooth, mother, I cannot tell, unless we be at Mile-End: Is not all the world Mile-End, mother?

Mrs Mer. No, Michael, not all the world, boy; but I can assure thee, Michael, Mile-End is a goodly matter:[1] There has been a pitchfield, my child, between the naughty Spaniels and the Englishmen; and the Spaniels ran away, Michael, and the Englishmen followed. My neighbour Coxstone was there, boy, and killed them all with a birding-piece.

Mich. Mother, forsooth!

Mrs Mer. What says my white boy?[2]

Mich. Shall not my father go with us too?

Mrs Mer. No, Michael, let thy father go snick-up,[3] he shall never come between a pair of sheets

[1] *Mile-End is a goodly matter: There has been a pitchfield*, &c.] This must relate to some mock fight which was fought at Mile-End, where the train-bands of the city were often exercised. One of the ballads mentioned by the fiddler in Monsieur Thomas, (vol. VI p 489,) is "The Landing of the Spaniards at Bow, with the Bloody Battle at Mile-End." Again in the epilogue to a Wife for a Month, (vol. VIII. p. 252,) "the action at Mile-End" alludes to the same or a similar mock-fight. Exercises of that nature seem to have taken place in Tothill-fields. So in Kirke's Seven Champions of Christendom, speaking of a giant, "Let me not lie, he was not the biggest that e'er we killed; he was just about the stature that Tuttle-field would fitly make a grave for; I have told ye of the place before; 'tis near London, where men go a-training to get 'em good stomachs."

[2] *White-boy.*] This was a usual term of endearment at the time. So, in Ford's 'Tis Pity she's a Whore, Bergetto says,—"I know, quoth I, I am his *white-boy*, and will not be gulled." Since the edition of Ford's Plays has been published, I have discovered that he borrowed the unfortunate subject of that tragedy from Rosset's *Histoires Tragiques de nostre temps*, second edition, Paris, 1616. 12, (p. 174,) He relates the story as having actually happened in France, in the reign of Henry IV.

[3] *Let thy father go* snick-up.] This phrase, which occurs again

with me again, while he lives; let him stay at home and sing for his supper, boy.—Come, child, sit down, and I'll shew my boy fine knacks, indeed: [*Takes out a Casket.*] Look here, Michael; here's a ring, and here's a brooch,[4] and here's a bracelet, and here's two rings more, and here's money and gold, by th' eye, my boy!

Mich. Shall I have all this, mother?

Mrs Mer. Ay, Michael, thou shalt have all, Michael.

" *Cit.* How lik'st thou this, wench?

" *Wife.* I cannot tell; I would have Ralph, George; I'll see no more else, indeed-la; and I pray you let the youths understand so much by word of mouth; for I tell you truly, I'm afraid o' my boy. Come, come, George, let's be merry and wise; the child's a fatherless child, and say they should put him into a strait pair of gaskins,[5] 'twere

in act III. sc. II. is equivalent to "go hang," as will appear from the following lines in Taylor's Praise of Hempseed:

" A Tiburne hempen-caudell well can cure you;
It can cure traytors, but I hold it fit
T' apply't ere they the treason doe comit,
Wherefore in Sparta it ycleped was
Snickup, which is in English, gallowgrass."

Again, in the Fleire, a comedy by Sharpham: " When they are sad do you sing, when they sing and are merry then take your time, and put 'em to't: if they will, so, if not, let 'em *snick-up*."

[4] *Brooch.*] This was originally a clasp or buckle, but was very generally used for any jewel or gold ornament. So in Powell's Mystery of Lending and Borrowing, 1636: " An husband (be it not vainly spoken) that for thrift and husbandry may be the very *browch* of all the city."

[5] *A strait pair of gaskins.*] This obsolete word generally denotes the wide hose of our ancestors; but the text proves that it was also used for that article of dress in general.

worse than knot-grass;[6] he would never grow after it.

Enter RALPH, TIM, *and* GEORGE.

"*Cit.* Here's Ralph, here's Ralph

"*Wife.* How do you, Ralph? you are welcome, Ralph, as I may say; it's a good boy! hold up thy head, and be not afraid; we are thy friends, Ralph. The gentlemen will praise thee, Ralph, if thou play'st thy part with audacity. Begin, Ralph, a' God's name!"

Ralph. My trusty Squire, unlace my helm; give me my hat.
Where are we, or what desart may this be?

George. Mirror of knighthood, this is, as I take it, the perilous Waltham-Down; in whose bottom stands the enchanted valley.

Mrs Mer. Oh, Michael, we are betrayed, we are betrayed! here be giants! Fly, boy, fly, boy, fly!

[*Exit with* MICHAEL, *leaving the Casket.*

Ralph. Lace on my helm again! What noise is this?
A gentle lady, flying the embrace
Of some uncourteous knight? I will relieve her.
Go, Squire, and say, the Knight that wears this Pestle
In honour of all ladies, swears revenge

[6] *Knot-grass.*]——— "Get you gone, you dwarf,
You Minimus, of hindring *knot-grass* made."
Midsummer-Night's Dream, act iii. sc. ii.

Upon which passage the last editor observes, "It appears that *knot-grass* was anciently supposed to prevent the growth of any animal or child;" and produces this passage, and the following from the Coxcomb, in proof of his observation: "We want a boy extremely for this function, kept under for a year with milk and *knot-grass*."—Reed.

Upon that recreant coward that pursues her;
Go comfort her, and that same gentle squire
That bears her company.

Tim. I go, brave Knight.

Ralph. My trusty dwarf and friend, reach me my shield;
And hold it while I swear: First, by my knighthood;
Then by the soul of Amadis de Gaul,
My famous ancestor; then by my sword
The beauteous Brionella[7] girt about me;
By this bright burning Pestle, of mine honour
The living trophy; and by all respect
Due to distressed damsels; here I vow
Never to end the quest of this fair lady,
And that forsaken squire, till by my valour
I gain their liberty! [*Exit.*

George. Heaven bless the Knight
That thus relieves poor errant gentlewomen. [*Exit.*

"*Wife.* Ay marry, Ralph, this has some savour in't; I would see the proudest of them all offer to carry his books after him. But, George, I will not have him go away so soon; I shall be sick if he go away, that I shall; call Ralph again, George, call Ralph again; I pr'ythee, sweetheart, let him come fight before me, and let's ha' some drums, and some trumpets, and let him kill all that comes near him, an thou lov'st me, George!

"*Cit.* Peace a little, bird! he shall kill them all, an they were twenty more on 'em than there are."

Brionella.] Brionelle is the name of Palmerin de Olivia's dwarf.

Enter JASPER.

Jasp. Now, Fortune, (if thou be'st not only ill)
Shew me thy better face, and bring about
Thy desperate wheel, that I may climb at length,
And stand; this is our place of meeting,
If love have any constancy. Oh, age,
Where only wealthy men are counted happy!
How shall I please thee, how deserve thy smiles,
When I am only rich in misery?
My father's blessing, and this little coin,
Is my inheritance; a strong revenue!
From earth thou art, and to the earth I give thee:
There grow and multiply, whilst fresher air
Breeds me a fresher fortune.—How! illusion!
[*Spies the Casket.*
What, hath the devil coin'd himself before me?
'Tis metal good; it rings well; I am waking,
And taking too, I hope. Now God's dear blessing
Upon his heart that left it here! 'tis mine;
These pearls, I take it, were not left for swine.
[*Exit.*

" *Wife.* I do not like that this unthrifty youth should embezzle away the money; the poor gentlewoman his mother will have a heavy heart for it, God knows.

" *Cit.* And reason good, sweetheart.

" *Wife.* But let him go; I'll tell Ralph a tale in's ear, shall fetch him again with a wannion,[8] I warrant him, if he be above ground; and besides, George, here are a number of sufficient gentlemen

[8] —— *with a wannion.*] A proverbial expression, which also occurs in Pericles, Eastward Hoe, the City Night-cap, and other old plays; but the precise meaning of the word *wannion* has never been explained.

can witness, and myself, and yourself, and the musicians, if we be call'd in question. But here comes Ralph; George, thou shalt hear him speak, an he were an emperal."

Enter RALPH *and* GEORGE.

Ralph. Comes not Sir Squire again?
George. Right courteous knight,
Your Squire doth come, and with him comes the lady.

Enter Mrs MERRYTHOUGHT, MICHAEL, *and* TIM.

Ralph. Fair! and the Squire of Damsels,[9] as I take it!
Madam,[1] if any service or devoir
Of a poor errant Knight may right your wrongs,

[9] *Squire of Damsels.*] Alluding to Spenser's Squire of Dames. —*Mason.*
He is again alluded to in Monsieur Thomas, vol. VI. p. 424.

[1] *Your squire doth come, and with him comes the lady.*

Enter Mrs Merrythought, &c.

For *and the squire of damsels, as I take it.*
Ralph. *Madam,* &c.] Sympson omits the period at the end of the first line, and alters *for* to *fair;* we think him right in the alteration of the word; but we must go further before this passage is cleared of corruption, since, by giving the *first* and *third* lines to one speaker, the *third* appears a bald and needless repetition of the sense of the *first*, which is complete in itself. We have therefore made *Ralph's* speech begin at the third line instead of the fourth; and apprehend that he first addresses himself both to Mrs Merrythought and Michael: Her he calls *Fair!* and him *Squire of Damsels!* as he names him afterwards, *this gentle Squire.* This is quite in his character, and the only reading that gives spirit, or even tolerable sense, to the third line; after which he proceeds to comfort them separately.—Ed. 1778.

Command it; I am prest[2] to give you succour;
For to that holy end I bear my armour.

Mrs Mer. Alas, sir, I am a poor gentlewoman, and I have lost my money in this forest.

Ralph. Desart, you would say, lady; and not lost
Whilst I have sword and lance. Dry up your tears,
Which ill befit the beauty of that face,
And tell the story, if I may request it,
Of your disastrous fortune.

Mrs Mer. Out, alas! I left a thousand pound, a thousand pound, e'en all the money I had laid up for this youth, upon the sight of your mastership, you look'd so grim, and, as I may say it, saving your presence, more like a giant than a mortal man.

Ralph. I am as you are, lady; so are they,
All mortal. But why weeps this gentle squire?

Mrs Mer. Has he not cause to weep, do you think, when he hath lost his inheritance?

Ralph. Young hope of valour, weep not; I am here
That will confound thy foe, and pay it dear
Upon his coward head, that dares deny
Distressed squires and ladies equity.
I have but one horse,[3] upon which shall ride
This lady fair behind me, and before
This courteous squire: Fortune will give us more
Upon our next adventure. Fairly speed
Beside us, Squire and Dwarf, to do us need!

[*Exeunt.*

" *Cit.* Did not I tell you, Nell, what your man would do? by the faith of my body, wench, for

[2] *Prest.*] i. e. *Ready.* See a note on the Wild Goose Chase, vol. X. p. 364.

[3] *I have but one horse, on which.*] The variation is Sympson's.

clean action and good delivery, they may all cast their caps at him.

"*Wife.* And so they may, i'faith; for I dare speak it boldly, the twelve companies of London cannot match him, timber for timber. Well, George, an he be not inveigled by some of these paltry players, I ha' much marvel; but, George, we ha' done our parts, if the boy have any grace to be thankful.

"*Cit.* Yes, I warrant thee, duckling."

Enter Master HUMPHREY *and* LUCE.

Hum. Good mistress Luce, however I in fault am
For your lame horse, you're welcome unto Waltham;
But which way now to go, or what to say,
I know not truly, till it be broad day.
Luce. Oh, fear not, master Humphrey; I am guide
For this place good enough.
Hum. Then up and ride;
Or, if it please you, walk for your repose;
Or sit, or, if you will, go pluck a rose:
Either of which shall be indifferent
To your good friend and Humphrey, whose consent
Is so entangled ever to your will,
As the poor harmless horse is to the mill.
Luce. 'Faith, an you say the word, we'll e'en sit down,
And take a nap.
Hum. 'Tis better in the town,
Where we may nap together; for, believe me,
To sleep without a snatch would mickle grieve me.
Luce. You're merry, master Humphrey.

Hum. So I am,
And have been ever merry from my dam.
Luce. Your nurse had the less labour.
Hum. 'Faith, it may be,
Unless it were by chance I did bewray me.

Enter JASPER.

Jasp. Luce! dear friend Luce!
Luce. Here, Jasper.
Jasp. You are mine.
Hum. If it be so, my friend, you use me fine:
What do you think I am?
Jasp. An arrant noddy.
Hum. A word of obloquy! Now, by God's body,
I'll tell thy master; for I know thee well.
Jasp. Nay, an you be so forward for to tell,
Take that, and that; and tell him, sir, I gave it:
And say I paid you well. [*Beats him.*
Hum. Oh, sir, I have it,
And do confess the payment. Pray, be quiet!
Jasp. Go, get you to your night-cap[4] and the diet,
To cure your beaten bones.
Luce. Alas, poor Humphrey!
Get thee some wholesome broth, with sage and cumfry;
A little oil of roses, and a feather
To 'noint thy back withal.
Hum. When I came hither,
'Would I had gone to Paris with John Dory![5]

[4] *Go, get to your night-cap.*] So the first quarto. The text is from the second.

[5] *John Dory.*] Sir John Hawkins, in his History of Music, says, "The song of *John Dory*, with the tune to it, is printed in the Deuteromelia, or the second part of Music's Melodie, 1609. The

Luce. Farewell, my pretty nump! I'm very sorry
I cannot bear thee company.

Hum. Farewell!
The devil's dam was ne'er so bang'd in hell.

[*Exeunt* LUCE *and* JASPER.

" *Wife.* This young Jasper will prove me another things, a' my conscience, an he may be suffered. George, dost not see, George, how a' swaggers, and flies at the very heads a' folks, as he were a dragon? Well, if I do not do his lesson for wronging the poor gentleman, I am no true woman. His friends that brought him up might have been better occupied, I wis, than have taught him these fegaries: He's e'en in the high way to the gallows, God bless him!

" *Cit.* You're too bitter, cony; the young man may do well enough for all this.

" *Wife.* Come hither, master Humphrey; has he hurt you? now beshrew his fingers for't! Here, sweetheart, here's some green ginger for thee. Now beshrew my heart, but a' has pepper-nel in's

legend of this person is, that being a sea-captain, or perhaps a pirate, he engaged to the king of France to bring the crew of an English ship bound as captives to Paris, and that accordingly he attempted to make prize of an English vessel, but was himself taken prisoner. The song of *John Dory*, and the tune to it, were a long time popular in England: In the comedy of The Chances, written by Beaumont and Fletcher, Antonio, a humorous old man, receives a wound, which he will not suffer to be dressed but upon condition that the song of *John Dory* be sung the while."—Ed. 1778.

The song itself will be found in a note on The Chances, (vol. VII. p. 67.) Its popularity was very extensive, and continued for a long time. It is thus mentioned in Drunken Barnaby's Journal, speaking of Kendal:

" *Ubi, (dicam pace vestra)*
Tectum mittitur è fenestra;
Cura lucri, cura fori,
Saltant cum Johanne Dori," &c.

head, as big as a pullet's egg! Alas, sweet lamb, how thy temples beat! Take the peace on him sweetheart, take the peace on him.

Enter Boy.

" *Cit.* No, no; you talk like a foolish woman! I'll ha' Ralph fight with him, and swinge him up well-favouredly.—Sirrah, Boy; come hither: Let Ralph come in and fight with Jasper.

" *Wife.* Ay, and beat him well; he's an unhappy boy.[6]

" *Boy.* Sir, you must pardon us; the plot of our play lies contrary; and 'twill hazard the spoiling of our play.

" Cit. *Plot* me no *plots!* I'll ha' Ralph come out; I'll make your house too hot for you else.

" *Boy.* Why, sir, he shall; but if any thing fall out of order, the gentlemen must pardon us.

" *Cit.* Go your ways, goodman Boy! I'll hold him a penny, he shall have his belly-full of fighting now. Ho! here comes Ralph! no more!"

Enter RALPH, *Mrs* MERRYTHOUGHT, MICHAEL, TIM, *and* GEORGE.

Ralph. What knight is that, squire? ask him if he keep
The passage, bound by love of lady fair,
Or else but prickant.[7]
Hum. Sir, I am no knight,
But a poor gentleman, that this same night

[6] *He's an* unhappy *boy.*] *Unhappy* was formerly used in the sense of wicked, mischievous.

[7] *Or else but* prickant.] That is, pricking or spurring along, bound on a journey.

Had stolen from me, upon yonder green,
My lovely wife, and suffer'd (to be seen
Yet extant on my shoulders) such a greeting,
That whilst I live, I shall think of that meeting.

" *Wife.* Ay, Ralph, he beat him unmercifully, Ralph; an thou sparest him, Ralph, I would thou wert hang'd.

" *Cit.* No more, Wife, no more!"

Ralph. Where is the caitiff wretch hath done this deed?
Lady, your pardon! that I may proceed
Upon the quest of this injurious knight.
And thou, fair squire, repute me not the worse,
In leaving the great venture of the purse,
And the rich casket, till some better leisure.

Enter Jasper *and* Luce.

Hum. Here comes the broker hath purloined my treasure.

Ralph. Go, squire, and tell him I am here,
An errant knight at arms, to crave delivery
Of that fair lady to her own knight's arms.
If he deny, bid him take choice of ground,
And so defy him.

Tim. From the Knight that bears
The Golden Pestle, I defy thee, Knight;
Unless thou make fair restitution
Of that bright lady.

Jasp. Tell the knight that sent thee
He is an ass; and I will keep the wench,
And knock his head-piece.

Ralph. Knight, thou art but dead,
If thou recall not thy uncourteous terms.

" *Wife.* Break his pate, Ralph; break his pate, Ralph, soundly!"

Jasp. Come, Knight; I'm ready for you.—Now your Pestle [*Snatches away his Pestle.*
Shall try what temper, sir, your mortar's of.
With that he stood upright in his stirrups, and gave the knight of the calves-skin such a knock, that he forsook his horse, and down he fell; and then he leaped upon him, and plucking off his helmet—— [*Knocks him down.*

Hum. Nay, an my noble Knight be down so soon,
Though I can scarcely go, I needs must run.
[*Exit.*

"*Wife.* Run, Ralph, run, Ralph; run for thy life, boy; Jasper comes, Jasper comes!"
[*Exit* RALPH *taking up the Pestle.*

Jasp. Come, Luce, we must have other arms for you;
Humphrey, and Golden Pestle, both adieu!
[*Exeunt.*

"*Wife.* Sure the devil, (God bless us!) is in this springald![8] Why, George, didst ever see such a fire-drake? I am afraid my boy's miscarried; if he be, though he were master Merrythought's son a thousand times, if there be any law in England, I'll make some of them smart for't.

"*Cit.* No, no; I have found out the matter, sweetheart; Jasper is enchanted; as sure as we are here, he is enchanted: he could no more have stood in Ralph's hands, than I can stand in my lord-mayor's. I'll have a ring to discover all enchantments, and Ralph shall beat him yet: Be no more vexed, for it shall be so.

[8] *Springald.*] An old word for a youth. So in the comedy of Wily Beguiled:—"Pray ye, maid, bid him welcome, and make much of him; for by my vay, he's a proper *springold.*"

SCENE III.

Before the Bell Inn at Waltham.

Enter RALPH, TIM, GEORGE, *Mrs* MERRYTHOUGHT, *and* MICHAEL.

" *Wife.* Oh, husband, here's Ralph again! Stay, Ralph; let me speak with thee: How dost thou, Ralph? Art thou not shrewdly hurt? the foul great lungies[9] laid unmercifully on thee; there's some sugar-candy for thee. Proceed; thou shalt have another bout with him.

" *Cit.* If Ralph had him at the fencing-school, if he did not make a puppy of him, and drive him up and down the school, he should ne'er come in my shop more."

Mrs Mer. Truly, master Knight of the Burning Pestle, I am weary.

Mich. Indeed-la, mother, and I am very hungry.

Ralph. Take comfort, gentle dame, and you, fair squire!
For in this desart there must needs be placed
Many strong castles, held by courteous knights;
And till I bring you safe to one of those
I swear by this my order ne'er to leave you.

[9] *The foul great* lungies.] Probably a cant phrase for a great awkward fellow, and the same as *lung*, which occurs in Love's Pilgrimage, vol. XIII. p. 65.

"*Wife*. Well said, Ralph! George, Ralph was ever comfortable, was he not?

"*Cit*. Yes, duck.

"*Wife*. I shall ne'er forget him: When we had lost our child, (you know it was strayed almost, alone, to Puddle-Wharf, and the criers were abroad for it, and there it had drowned itself but for a sculler) Ralph was the most comfortablest to me! 'Peace, mistress,' says he, 'let it go! I'll get another as good.' Did he not, George? did he not say so?

"*Cit*. Yes, indeed did he, mouse."

George. I would we had a mess of pottage, and a pot of drink, squire, and were going to-bed.

Tim. Why, we are at Waltham-town's end, and that's the Bell Inn.

George. Take courage, valiant Knight, damsel, and squire!
I have discovered, not a stone's cast off,
An ancient castle held by the old knight
Of the most holy order of the Bell,
Who gives to all knights-errant entertain:
There plenty is of food, and all prepared
By the white hands of his own lady dear.
He hath three squires that welcome all his guests:
The first, hight Chamberlino;[4] who will see

[4] *The first* high *Chamberlain*
—— *height* Tapstro
—— *squire Ostlero* height.] The correction of *height* for *high* is from Mr Theobald's conjecture, but he did not go to the bottom of the grievance, for Chamberlain is not quantity, and so can't stand in the verse. *Chamberlino* is from the said quarto of 1613. *Tapstro*, octavo, *Tastero*, quarto, I have altered to *Tapstero*. *Ostlero hight* is from the first quarto too.—*Sympson*.

Hight is no amendment, being in old books; as is also *Chamberlino*. The substituting *Tapstero* for *Tastero* (if to be called an amendment) is the only one.—Ed. 1778.

Tapstro is the reading of the quarto of 1635, so that Sympson's

Our beds prepared, and bring us snowy sheets,
Where never footman stretch'd his butter'd hams.[5]
The second, hight Tapstero; who will see
Our pots full filled, and no froth therein.
The third, a gentle squire, Ostlero hight,
Who will our palfries slick with whisps of straw,
And in the manger put them oats enough,
And never grease their teeth with candle-snuff.[6]

"*Wife.* That same dwarf's a pretty boy, but the Squire's a groutnole."[7]

Ralph. Knock at the gates, my squire, with stately lance!

Enter Tapster.

Tap. Who's there?—You're welcome, gentlemen! will you see a room?

George. Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, this is the squire Tapstero.

Ralph. Fair squire Tapstero! I, a wandering Knight,
Hight of the Burning Pestle, in the quest

ingenuity is confined to the introduction of an *e* in this word, which he might have found twice in a correct state lower down in the very next page.

[5] *Where never* footman *stretched his buttered hams.*] This alludes to the running footmen, a fashionable piece of splendid folly prevalent at the time. They were still kept by some noblemen in Scotland about the middle of the last century, and are yet to be met with occasionally upon the continent. Like the jockies, they are put upon a particular diet; and, in order to prevent cramps, the calves of their legs are greased, and to this the text refers.

[6] *And never grease their teeth with candle-snuff.*] A common trick of the ostlers at the time to prevent the horses from eating the hay. See a note on Love's Pilgrimage, vol. XIII. p. 319.

[7] *Groutnold.*] Corrected from the quarto of 1613. The word is equivalent to thick-head. Sherwood interprets "a grout-head for grout-noll, *testede boeuf, qui a grosse teste.*"

Of this fair lady's casket and wrought purse,
Losing myself in this vast wilderness,
Am to this castle well by fortune brought;
Where hearing of the goodly entertain
Your knight of holy order of the Bell
Gives to all damsels, and all errant knights,
I thought to knock, and now am bold to enter.

Tap. An't please you see a chamber, you are very welcome. [*Exeunt.*

" *Wife.* George, I would have something done, and I cannot tell what it is.

" *Cit.* What is it, Nell?

" *Wife.* Why, George, shall Ralph beat nobody again? Pr'ythee, sweetheart, let him!

" *Cit.* So he shall, Nell; and if I join with him, we'll knock them all.

SCENE IV.

London. A Room in the House of Venterwels.

Enter Master HUMPHREY *and* VENTERWELS.

" *Wife.* Oh, George, here's master Humphrey again now, that lost mistress Luce; and mistress Luce's father. Master Humphrey will do somebody's errand, I warrant him."

Hum. Father, it's true in arms I ne'er shall clasp
her;
For she is stol'n away by your man Jasper.

" *Wife.* I thought he would tell him."

Vent. Unhappy that I am, to lose my child!
Now I begin to think on Jasper's words,
Who oft hath urged to me thy foolishness:
Why didst thou let her go? thou lovest her not,
That wouldst bring home thy life, and not bring her.

Hum. Father, forgive me; shall I tell you true?
Look on my shoulders, they are black and blue:
Whilst to and fro fair Luce and I were winding,
He came and basted me with a hedge-binding.

Vent. Get men and horses straight! we will be there
Within this hour. You know the place again?

Hum. I know the place where he my loins did swaddle;
I'll get six horses, and to each a saddle.

Vent. Mean time, I will go talk with Jasper's father. [*Exeunt.*

"*Wife.* George, what wilt thou lay with me now, that master Humphrey has not mistress Luce yet? speak, George, what wilt thou lay with me?

"*Cit.* No, Nell; I warrant thee, Jasper is at Puckeridge with her by this.

"*Wife.* Nay, George, you must consider mistress Luce's feet are tender; and besides, 'tis dark; and I promise you truly, I do not see how he should get out of Waltham-Forest with her yet.

"*Cit.* Nay, cony, what wilt thou lay with me that Ralph has her not yet?

"*Wife.* I will not lay against Ralph, honey, because I have not spoken with him. But look, George; peace! here comes the merry old gentleman again."

SCENE V.

An Apartment in Merrythought's *House.*

Enter Old MERRYTHOUGHT.

Mer. [*Sings.*] *When it was grown to dark mid-night*
And all were fast asleep,
In came Margaret's grimly ghost,
And stood at William's feet.[8]

I have money, and meat, and drink, before-hand, till to-morrow at noon; why should I be sad? Methinks I have half-a-dozen jovial spirits within me; [*Sings.*] '*I am three merry men,*[9] *and three*

[8] *When it was grown, &c.*] This stanza is from the ballad of Fair Margaret and Sweet William, Reliques of Antient Poetry, vol. III. p. 120, where it is thus given:

"When day was gone and night was come,
And all men fast asleep,
Then came the spirit of fair Marg'ret
And stood at William's feet."

The quotation in the text, and another at the end of the third act, gave rise to Mallet's Margaret's Ghost.

[9] *Three merry men, &c.*] See vol. VII. p. 189 of this work. In Mayne's Amorous War, the song of the culprits in Rollo seems to be directly alluded to:

——" If't be our destiny
To die by th' string, the comfort is, *we're three.*"

merry men!'—To what end should any man be sad in this world? Give me a man that when he goes to hanging cries, "*Troul the black bowl to me!*"[1] and a woman that will sing a catch in her travail! I have seen a man come by my door with a serious face, in a black cloak, without a hatband, carrying his head as if he look'd for pins in the street: I have look'd out of my window half-a-year after, and have spied that man's head upon London-bridge: 'Tis vile; never trust a tailor that does not sing at his work! his mind is on nothing but filching.

"*Wife.* Mark this, George! 'tis worth noting: Godfrey, my tailor, you know, never sings, and he had fourteen yards to make this gown; and I'll be sworn, mistress Penistone the draper's wife had one made with twelve."

Mer. *'Tis mirth that fills the veins with blood,*
More than wine, or sleep, or food;
Let each man keep his heart at ease,
No man dies of that disease.
He that would his body keep
From diseases, must not weep;

Again, in Davenport's New Trick to Cheat the Devil:

"A scrivener, an usurer, and a pimp,
All joined to ruin a young hopeful gentleman;
Now are they turning an old *three-man's song:*
We be knaves all three."

[1] *Troul the black bowl to me.*] *Trowle*, or *trole the bowl* was a common phrase in drinking for passing the vessel about, as appears by the following beginning of an old catch:

"Trole, trole the bowl to me,
And I will trole the same again to thee."
Sir John Hawkins's History of Music, vol. III. p. 22.

It is probably the above catch which Merrythought introduces in his speech.

But whoever laughs and sings,
Never he his body brings
Into fevers, gouts, or rheums,
Or ling'ringly his lungs consumes;
Or meets with aches in the bone,
Or catarrhs, or griping stone:
But contented lives for aye;
The more he laughs, the more he may.

"*Wife*. Look, George; how sayst thou by this, George? Is't not a fine old man? Now God's blessing a' thy sweet lips! when wilt thou be so merry, George? 'Faith, thou art the frowning'st little thing, when thou art angry, in a country.

"*Cit*. Peace, cony! thou shalt see him took down too, I warrant thee.

Enter VENTERWELS.

Here's Luce's father come now."

Mer. [*Sings.*] *As you came from Walsingham,*
From the Holy Land,
There met you not with my true love
By the way as you came?[1]

Vent. Oh, master Merrythought, my daughter's gone!
This mirth becomes you not; my daughter's gone!

[1] *As you came*, &c.] From a ballad printed in Percy's Reliques of Antient Poetry, vol. II. p. 94, where the stanza runs thus:

"As ye came from the holy land
Of blessed Walsingham,
O, met you not with my true love
As by the way you came?"

Mer. *Why, an if she be, what care I?*
Or let her come, or go, or tarry.

Vent. Mock not my misery; it is your son (Whom I have made my own, when all forsook him) Has stol'n my only joy, my child, away.

Mer. *He set her on a milk-white steed,*
And himself upon a grey;
He never turn'd his face again,
But he bore her quite away.[3]

Vent. Unworthy of the kindness I have shewn To thee, and thine; too late, I well perceive, Thou art consenting to my daughter's loss.

Mer. Your daughter? what a stir's here wi' your daughter? Let her go, think no more on her, but sing loud. If both my sons were on the gallows, I would sing,

Down, down, down; they fall
Down, and arise they never shall.

Vent. Oh, might I [but] behold her once again, And she once more embrace her aged sire!

Mer. Fy, how scurvily this goes! "And she once more embrace her aged sire?" You'll make a dog on her, will ye?[4] she cares much for her aged sire, I warrant you.

[3] *He set her*, &c.] A similar verse occurs in the ballad called The Douglas Tragedy, printed in the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, vol. II. p. 217 :—

"He's mounted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple grey,
With a buglet horn hung by his side,
And lightly they rode away."

[4] *And she once more embrace her aged* sire?
You'll make a dog *on her, will ye?*] We usually talk of a dog's sire and dam.

She cares not for her daddy, nor
She cares not for her mammy, for
She is, she is, she is,
She is my lord of Lowgave's lassy.

Vent. For this thy scorn I will pursue that son Of thine to death.

Mer. Do; and when you ha' kill'd him,

Give him flowers enow, Palmer, give him flowers enow!
Give him red and white, and blue, green, and yellow.

Vent. I'll fetch my daughter——

Mer. I'll hear no more o' your daughter; it spoils my mirth.

Vent. I say, I'll fetch my daughter.

Mer. *Was never man for lady's sake,*[5]
Down, down,
Tormented as I poor Sir Guy,
De derry down,
For Lucy's sake, that lady bright,
Down, down,
As ever men beheld with eye!
De derry down.

Vent. I'll be revenged, by Heaven! [*Exeunt.*

[5] *Was never man*, &c.] A stanza from the Legend of Sir Guy. Percy's Reliques of Antient Poetry, vol III. p. 102:—

"Was ever knight for lady's sake
Soe tost in love, as I Sir Guy
For Phelis fayre, that lady bright
As ever man beheld with eye."

The ballad is again quoted in The Little French Lawyer, (vol. V. p. 162.)

FINIS ACTUS SECUNDI. [*Music.*

"*Wife.* How dost thou like this, George?

"*Cit.* Why this is well, cony; but if Ralph were hot once, thou shouldst see more.

"*Wife.* The fiddlers go again, husband.

"*Cit.* Ay, Nell; but this is scurvy music. I gave the whoreson gallows-money, and I think he has not got me the waits of Southwark: If I hear 'em not anon,[6] I'll twinge him by the ears.—You musicians, play Baloo![7]

"*Wife.* No, good George, let's ha' Lachrymæ![8]

"*Cit.* Why this is it, cony.

"*Wife.* It's all the better, George. Now, sweet lamb, what story is that painted upon the cloth?[9] the confutation of St Paul?

[6] *If I hear* him *not.*] Amended by Sympson.

[7] *Baloo.*] See Percy's Reliques of Antient Poetry, vol. II. p. 196. Lady Anne Bothwell's Lamentation; in which the concluding lines of each stanza are these:

> "*Balow*, my babe, lie stil and sleipe!
> It grieves me sair to see thee weepe."—Ed. 1778.

There are several other popular songs which have a similar burden, but the text alludes to the tune, which was still popular in the reign of Charles II.

[8] *Lachrymæ.*] This tune is frequently mentioned in these volumes. See vol. VII. 151, IX. 219, 480, &c.

[9] *What story is that painted upon the cloth?*] That is, upon the drop scene, which appears not to have moved, as at present, upon a roller, but a plain curtain to draw back to each side of the stage. It may here be observed, that the present play is one of the strongest proofs in favour of Mr Malone's argument, that there were no moveable scenes in the ancient theatres; as the citizen and his wife would certainly have made their observations on the different alterations, which must have been necessary had the scenery intended to be imagined been actually represented. See also the beginning of

"*Cit.* No, lamb; that's Ralph and Lucrece.
"*Wife.* Ralph and Lucrece? which Ralph? our Ralph?
"*Cit.* No, mouse; that was a Tartarian.[1]
"*Wife.* A Tartarian? Well, I would the fiddlers had done, that we might see our Ralph again!"

the fourth act, where the boy answers to the demand of the wife, that the players cannot represent the King of Cracovia's house covered with black velvet.

[1] *That was a* Tartarian.] The citizen's mistake and his wife's consequent surprise will not be understood without recollecting that *Tartarian* was a cant term for a thief. So in The Merry Devil of Edmonton, the Host says—"There's not a *Tartarian* nor a carrier shall breathe upon your geldings; they have villainous rank feet the rogues, and they shall not sweat in my linen." And in The Wandering Jew, 1640, as quoted by Mr Reed, the Hangman says—"I pray, master Jew, bestow a cast of your office upon me, a poor member of the law, by telling me my fortune, whether I shall die in my bed or no, or what else shall happen to me; and if any *thieving Tartarian* shall break in upon you, I will with both hands nimbly lend a cast of my office upon him."

ACT III. SCENE I.

Waltham Forest.

Enter JASPER *and* LUCE.

Jasp. Come, my dear deer! though we have lost our way,
We have not lost ourselves. Are you not weary
With this night's wand'ring, broken from your rest?
And frighted with the terror that attends
The darkness of this wild unpeopled place?
Luce. No, my best friend; I cannot either fear,
Or entertain a weary thought, whilst you
(The end of all my full desires) stand by me:
Let them that lose their hopes, and live to languish
Amongst the number of forsaken lovers,
Tell the long weary steps, and number time,
Start at a shadow, and shrink up their blood,
Whilst I (possessed with all content and quiet)
Thus take my pretty love, and thus embrace him.
Jasp. You have caught me, Luce, so fast, that whilst I live
I shall become your faithful prisoner,
And wear these chains for ever.—Come, sit down,
And rest your body, too, too delicate
For these disturbances.—So! will you sleep?
Come, do not be more able than you are;
I know you are not skilful in these watches,
For women are no soldiers: Be not nice,

But take it; sleep, I say.
Luce. I cannot sleep;
Indeed I cannot, friend.
Jasp. Why then we'll sing,
And try how that will work upon our senses.
Luce. I'll sing, or say, or any thing but sleep.
Jasp. Come, little mermaid, rob me of my heart
With that enchanting voice.
Luce. You mock me, Jasper.

SONG.

Jasp. *Tell me, dearest, what is love?*[1]
Luce. *'Tis a lightning from above;*
'Tis an arrow, 'tis a fire,
'Tis a boy they call Desire.
'Tis a smile
Doth beguile
Jasp. *The poor hearts of men that prove.*

Tell me more, are women true?
Luce. *Some love change, and so do you.*
Jasp. *Are they fair, and never kind?*
Luce. *Yes, when men turn with the wind.*
Jasp. *Are they froward?*
Luce. *Ever toward*
Those that love, to love anew.

Jasp. Dissemble it no more; I see the god
Of heavy sleep lay on his heavy mace
Upon your eye-lids.
Luce. I am very heavy. [*Sleeps.*

[1] *Tell me, dearest, what is love.*] This song, with a little variation, is also in The Captain, vol. IX. p. 175.—Ed. 1778.

Jasp. Sleep, sleep; and quiet rest crown thy sweet thoughts!
Keep from her fair blood [all] distempers,[3] startings,
Horrors, and fearful shapes! let all her dreams
Be joys, and chaste delights, embraces, wishes,
And such new pleasures as the ravish'd soul
Gives to the senses!—So;' my charms have took.
Keep her, ye powers divine, whilst I contemplate
Upon the wealth and beauty of her mind!
She's only fair, and constant, only kind,
And only to thee, Jasper. Oh, my joys!
Whither will you transport me? let not fullness
Of my poor buried hopes come up together,
And overcharge my spirits; I am weak!
Some say (however ill) the sea and women
Are govern'd by the moon; both ebb and flow,
Both full of changes; yet to them that know,
And truly judge, these but opinions are,
And heresies, to bring on pleasing war
Between our tempers, that without these were
Both void of after-love, and present fear;
Which are the best of Cupid. Oh, thou child
Bred from despair, I dare not entertain thee,
Having a love without the faults of women,
And greater in her perfect goods than men;
Which to make good, and please myself the stronger,
Though certainly I am certain of her love,
I'll try her, that the world and memory
May sing to after-times her constancy.— [*Draws.*
Luce! Luce! awake!
Luce. Why do you fright me, friend,
With those distemper'd looks? what makes your sword

[3] *Keep from her fair blood distempers, startings.*] Sympson, to assist the measure, added the word ALL.—Ed. 1778.

Drawn in your hand? who hath offended you?—
I pr'ythee, Jasper, sleep; thou'rt wild with watching.

Jasp. Come, make your way to Heaven, and bid the world,
With all the villainies that stick upon it,
Farewell; you're for another life.

Luce. Oh, Jasper,
How have my tender years committed evil,
Especially against the man I love,
Thus to be cropp'd untimely?

Jasp. Foolish girl,
Canst thou imagine I could love his daughter
That flung me from my fortune into nothing?
Discharged me his service, shut the doors
Upon my poverty, and scorn'd my prayers,
Sending me, like a boat without a mast,
To sink or swim? Come; by this hand, you die!
I must have life and blood, to satisfy
Your father's wrongs.

" *Wife.* Away, George, away! raise the watch at Ludgate, and bring a mittimus from the justice for this desperate villain! Now I charge you, gentlemen, see the king's peace kept! Oh, my heart, what a varlet's this, to offer manslaughter upon the harmless gentlewoman!

" *Cit.* I warrant thee, sweetheart, we'll have him hampered."

Luce. Oh, Jasper, be not cruel!
If thou wilt kill me, smile, and do it quickly,
And let not many deaths appear before me!
I am a woman made of fear and love,
A weak, weak woman; kill not with thy eyes!
They shoot me through and through. Strike! I am ready;
And, dying, still I love thee.

Enter VENTERWELS, *Master* HUMPHREY, *and Men.*

Vent. Whereabouts?
Jasp. No more of this; now to myself again.
Hum. There, there he stands, with sword, like martial knight,
Drawn in his hand; therefore beware the fight,
You that be wise; for, were I good Sir Bevis,
I would not stay his coming. By your leavès.[4]
Vent. Sirrah, restore my daughter!
Jasp. Sirrah, no.
Vent. Upon him then!
[LUCE *is torn from* JASPER.
"*Wife.* So; down with him, down with him, down with him! cut him i' th' leg, boys, cut him i' th' leg!"
Vent. Come your ways, minion! I'll provide a cage
For you, you're grown so tame. Horse her away!
Hum. Truly, I'm glad your forces have the day.
[*Exeunt all but* JASPER.
Jasp. They're gone, and I am hurt; my love is lost,
Never to get again. Oh, me unhappy!
Bleed, bleed and die.—I cannot. Oh, my folly,
Thou hast betrayed me! Hope, where art thou fled?
Tell me, if thou be'st any where remaining,
Shall I but see my love again? Oh, no!

[4] *By your* leaves.] This must be pronounced as two syllables; it is in the taste of Chaucer and our old English poets: 'Tis a license however our poets seldom take, and I don't remember above three or four instances of it throughout the edition.—*Sympson.*

One might also suppose that Sympson conceived the poet to be serious in dividing the word 'Tis in the taste of master Humphrey, for Chaucer was never thought of.

She will not deign to look upon her butcher,
Nor is it fit she should; yet I must venture.
Oh, Chance, or Fortune, or whate'er thou art,
That men adore for powerful, hear my cry,
And let me loving live, or losing die![5] [*Exit.*

"*Wife.* Is a' gone, George?

"*Cit.* Ay, cony.

"*Wife.* Marry, and let him go, sweetheart! By the faith a' my body, a' has put me into such a fright, that I tremble (as they say) as 'twere an aspen-leaf: Look a' my little finger, George, how it shakes! Now in truth every member of my body is the worse for't.

"*Cit.* Come, hug in mine arms, sweet mouse; he shall not fright thee any more. Alas, mine own dear heart, how it quivers!

SCENE II.

A Room in the Bell-Inn.

Enter Mrs MERRYTHOUGHT, RALPH, MICHAEL, TIM, GEORGE, *Host, and a Tapster.*

"*Wife.* Oh, Ralph! how dost thou, Ralph? How hast thou slept to-night? has the knight used thee well?

"*Cit.* Peace, Nell; let Ralph alone!"

[5] *And let me* loving *live, or losing die.*] *Loving* means here, possessing her I love.—*Mason.*

Tap. Master, the reckoning is not paid.

Ralph. Right courteous Knight, who, for the order's sake
Which thou hast ta'en, hang'st out the holy Bell,
As I this flaming Pestle bear about,
We render thanks to your puissant self,
Your beauteous lady, and your gentle squires,
For thus refreshing of our wearied limbs,
Stiffen'd with hard atchievements in wild desart.

Tap. Sir, there is twelve shillings to pay.

Ralph. Thou merry squire Tapstero, thanks to thee
For comforting our souls with double jug!
And if adventurous Fortune prick thee forth,
Thou jovial squire, to follow feats of arms,
Take heed thou tender every lady's cause,
Every true knight, and every damsel fair!
But spill the blood of treacherous Saracens,
And false enchanters, that with magic spells
Have done to death full many a noble knight.

Host. Thou valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, give ear to me; there is twelve shillings to pay, and, as I am a true Knight, I will not bate a penny.

" *Wife.* George, I pray thee tell me, must Ralph pay twelve shillings now?

" *Cit.* No, Nell, no; nothing but the old Knight is merry with Ralph.

" *Wife.* Oh, is't nothing else? Ralph will be as merry as he."

Ralph. Sir Knight, this mirth of yours becomes you well;
But, to requite this liberal courtesy,
If any of your squires will follow arms,
He shall receive from my heroic hand,
A knighthood, by the virtue of this Pestle.

Host. Fair Knight, I thank you for your noble

offer;[6] therefore, gentle Knight, twelve shillings you must pay, or I must cap you.[7]

"*Wife*. Look, George! did not I tell thee as much? the Knight of the Bell is in earnest. Ralph shall not be beholding to him: Give him his money, George, and let him go snick-up.[8]

"*Cit*. Cap Ralph? No; hold your hand, Sir Knight of the Bell! There's your money; have you any thing to say to Ralph now? Cap Ralph?

"*Wife*. I would you should know it, Ralph has friends that will not suffer him to be capt for ten times so much, and ten times to the end of that. Now take thy course, Ralph!"

Mrs Mer. Come, Michael; thou and I will go home to thy father; he hath enough left to keep us a day or two, and we'll set fellows abroad to cry our purse and our casket: Shall we, Michael?

Mich. Ay, I pray, mother; in truth my feet are full of chilblains with travelling.

"*Wife*. 'Faith, and those chilblains are a foul trouble. Mistress Merrythought, when your youth comes home, let him rub all the soles of his feet, and his heels, and his ancles, with a mouse-skin;

6 *Fair Knight, I thank you for noble offer.*] So the first quarto. The text is from the second.

7 ——— *or I must* cap *you.*] With the nature of this punishment I am not acquainted. That it continued in use till the eighteenth century will be seen by the following quotation:—

" About the middle of the wharf, was a stone arch over the passage to Traytor's gate, where stood a centinel, who, I observed, was very careful nobody should lean upon it, or touch it, lest their elbows or their fingers should wear away her majesty's free-stone; and to p— against it was a crime that deserved *capping* at least, except (like swearing at a precisian's club) for every such offence you would forfeit sixpence."—WARD's *London Spy*, fifth edit. 1718, p. 318.

8 *Let him go* snick-up.] Se above, p. 179.

or, if none of your people can catch a mouse, when he goes to-bed, let him roll his feet in the warm embers, and I warrant you he shall be well; and you may make him put his fingers between his toes, and smell to them; it's very sovereign for his head, if he be costive."

Mrs Mer. Master Knight of the Burning Pestle, my son Michael and I bid you farewell: I thank your worship heartily for your kindness.

Ralph. Farewell, fair lady, and your tender squire!
If pricking through these desarts, I do hear
Of any traiterous knight, who through his guile
Hath lit upon your casket and your purse,
I will despoil him of them and restore them.

Mrs Mer. I thank your worship.

[*Exit with* Michael.

Ralph. Dwarf, bear my shield; squire, elevate my lance;
And now, farewell, you Knight of holy Bell!

" *Cit.* Ay, ay, Ralph, all is paid."

Ralph. But yet, before I go, speak, worthy knight,
If aught you do of sad adventures know,
Where errant-knight may through his prowess win
Eternal fame, and free some gentle souls
From endless bonds of steel and lingering pain.

Host. Sirrah, go to Nick the barber, and bid him prepare himself, as I told you before, quickly.

Tap. I am gone, sir. [*Exit.*

Host. Sir Knight, this wilderness affordeth none
But the great venture, where full many a knight
Hath tried his prowess, and come off with shame;
And where I would not have you lose your life,
Against no man, but furious fiend of hell.

Ralph. Speak on, Sir Knight; tell what he is, and where:

For here I vow[9] upon my blazing badge,
Never to blaze a day in quietness;
But bread and water will I only eat,
And the green herb and rock shall be my couch,
Till I have quell'd that man, or beast, or fiend,
That works such damage to all errant-knights.
Host. Not far from hence, near to a craggy cliff,
At the north end of this distressed town,
There doth stand a lowly house,
Ruggedly builded, and in it a cave
In which an ugly giant now doth won,[1]
Ycleped Barbaroso; in his hand
He shakes a naked lance of purest steel,
With sleeves turn'd up; and him before he wears
A motley garment, to preserve his clothes

[9] *For here I vow*, &c.] It would be endless to quote instances of the vows of knight-errants when entering upon a quest. Don Quixote's oath, founded on that of the Marquis de Mantua, immediately occurs to recollection, and seems the one alluded to in the text. Pellicer, in his excellent edition of Don Quixote, observes, that Cervantes either did not recollect or purposely altered the vow of the marquis, which he subjoins from the old ballad, and which was, never to comb his hair, nor cut his beard, nor to change his dress, nor put on new shoes, never to enter any town or village, not to take off his armour, unless to wash his body; never to eat upon a table-cloth, nor sit down at a table, till he had revenged Baldovinos. In the surreptitious second part of Don Quixote by Avellaneda, (ed. Madrid, 1805, 12. vol. I. p. 217.) the fictitious giant Bramidan del Tajayunque sums up a most comprehensive vow in these terms, by referring to the same romance-ballad: "*Juro y prometo de no comer pan in manteles, ni holgarme con la reyna, y en suma, juro todos los demas juramentos que en semejantes trances suelen jurar los verdaderos caballeros andantes, cuya lista hallarás en la historia que refiere el amargo llanto que se hizo sobre el malogrado Valdovinos.*" In the romance of Perceforest, (edit. 1531, vol. I. cap. XLI.) Alexander the Great and his chivalry take an oath that they will never rest one day in one place until the great quest is accomplished. The lovely damsel of the lake becoming enamoured of Alexander, detains him for twelve days in her castle, which her magic art represents to him as one.

[1] *Won.*] Old word for *dwell.*—Sympson.

From blood of those knights which he massacres,
And ladies gent; without his door doth hang
A copper bason, on a prickant spear;
At which no sooner gentle knights can knock
But the shrill sound fierce Barbaroso hears,
And rushing forth, brings in the errant-knight,
And sets him down in an enchanted chair:
Then with an engine, which he hath prepared,
With forty teeth, he claws his courtly crown,
Next makes him wink, and underneath his chin
He plants a brazen piece of mighty bord,[2]
And knocks his bullets round about his cheeks;
Whilst with his fingers, and an instrument
With which he snaps his hair off, he doth fill
The wretch's ears with a most hideous noise.
Thus every knight-adventurer he doth trim,
And now no creature dares encounter him.

Ralph. In God's name, I will fight with him:[3]
Kind sir,
Go but before me to this dismal cave
Where this huge giant Barbaroso dwells,
And, by that virtue that brave Rosicler
That damned brood of ugly giants slew,[4]

[2] *A brazen piece of mighty* board.] So the [folio and] octavo, the first [and second] quarto, *of mighty* bord. Both of which are foreign to the places they occupy. I conjecture the poets intended to say *bore;* so the cavity of a gun, cannon, &c. is commonly called: And though the anachronism of making ordnance contemporary with knight-errantry may be allowed, yet nonsense has, or can have, no claim to the like privilege.—*Sympson.*

The old quarto is right. *Bord* means rim or circumference. The word is used in this sense by Spenser.—*Mason.*

Sympson commits two very absurd mistakes: he did not understand that the brazen piece was the barber's bason; and did not recollect that the time in which the comedy was supposed to be acted was the age of our authors, not that of chivalry.

[3] *I will fight him.*] Corrected in 1635.

[4] *—by that virtue that brave* Rosicler
That damned brood of ugly giants slew.] Rosicler's adventures

And Palmerin Frannarco overthrew,[5]
I doubt not but to curb this traitor foul,
And to the devil send his guilty soul.

Host. Brave-sprighted Knight, thus far I will perform
This your request; I'll bring you within sight
Of this most loathsome place, inhabited
By a more loathsome man; but dare not stay,
For this main force swoops all he sees away.

Ralph. Saint George! Set on; before march, squire and page! [*Exeunt.*

"*Wife.* George, dost think Ralph will confound the giant?

"*Cit.* I hold my cap to a farthing he does: Why, Nell, I saw him wrestle with the great Dutchman,[6] and hurl him.

with the giants which infested the kingdom of Lira occur in the fourth volume of the Chevalier de Soleil, a French translation of the Spanish romance alluded to above. Calderon founded his comedy, entitled El Castillo de Lindabridis; on the same romance.

[5] *And Palmerin Frannarco overthrew.*] This combat is related in the fifty-first chapter of Palmerin d' Oliva, fol. 79, of the Dutch translation, Arnhem, 1613, from which chapter the passage read by Ralph in the second scene of the first act is quoted.

[6] *The great Dutchman.*] Possibly this is the same person who is mentioned in S. Rowley's Noble Spanish Soldier:—"Shall I be that German fencer, and beat all the knocking boys before me? Shall I kill him?" It must be recollected, that the term Dutch was formerly in general applied more properly than now to the Germans; the Dutch being commonly called Hollanders. Another allusion probably to the same person occurs in The Roaring Girl, by Middleton and Dekkar:

——"What durst move you, sir,
To think me whorish? a name which I'd tear out
From the *high German's throat.*"

Mr Reed quotes the following allusion to him from the Curtain Drawer of the World, 1612. 4. p. 27:—"Ask but the Curtain Drawer, and he will tell you that few there are, and those escape

"*Wife.* 'Faith, and that Dutchman was a goodly man, if all things were answerable to his bigness. And yet they say there was a Scotchman higher than he, and that they two and a knight met,[7] and saw one another for nothing. But of all the sights that ever were in London, since I was married, methinks the little child that was so fair grown about the members was the prettiest; that and the hermaphrodite.[8]

"*Cit.* Nay, by your leave, Nell, Ninivie was better.

"*Wife.* Ninivie? Oh, that was the story of

very hardly, like the bird out of the snare, like the *German* out of Wood-street, or those that commit murder, or like him that escapes the hangman from the tree of execution."

[7] *That they two and a* knight *met.*] The correction in the present edition I hope will be allowed by every candid and judicious reader: *Night* being the time when these *men-monsters* remove from place to place, thereby to prevent spoiling their market, by exposing to common view what they would have the world pay dearly for the sight of.—*Sympson.*

Sympson reads *on a night*, and he may be right; yet perhaps the authors alluded to some known anecdote. A gentleman much deformed came amongst others to see Burns the Irish giant; "Return his money," growled the Patagonian to his door-keeper, "we monsters pay nothing for seeing each other."

[8] *That and the* hermaphrodite.] Perhaps the redoubted Moll Cut-purse, or Mary Frith, who was commonly reputed to be a hermaphrodite. It may have been one of her pecuniary resources to exhibit herself for money. The circumstance mentioned previously is not without its parallel in modern times. Such monsters were usually exhibited at fairs. So in Lingua, or the Combat of the Five Senses: "Visus, I wonder that, amongst all your objects, you presented us not with Plato's idea, or the sight of Nimveh, Babylon, London, or some *Sturbridge fair monsters.*"

The motion or puppet show of Niniveh was highly popular at the time, and it is often mentioned in the antient drama; for instance in Ben Jonson's Every Man in his Humour, and Bartholomew Fair, in Lingua, as quoted in the preceding note, and in our authors' Wit at Several Weapons, (vol. XI. p. 272.)

Joan and the wall,[9] was it not, George?
"*Cit.* Yes, lamb

SCENE III.

London. The Street before Merrythought's *House.*

Enter Mrs MERRYTHOUGHT.

"*Wife.* Look, George; here comes mistress Merrythought again! and I would have Ralph come and fight with the giant; I tell you true, I long to see't.

"*Cit.* Good mistress Merrythought, be gone, I pray you, for my sake! I pray you forbear a little; you shall have audience presently; I have a little business.

"*Wife.* Mistress Merrythought, if it please you to refrain your passion a little, till Ralph have dispatched the giant out of the way, we shall think ourselves much bound to thank you: I thank you, good mistress Merrythought.

[*Exit Mrs* MERRYTHOUGHT.

Enter a Boy.

"*Cit.* Boy, come hither; send away Ralph and this whoreson giant quickly.

"*Boy.* In good faith, sir, we cannot; you'll

[9] *Story of* Joan *and the* wall.] Affected blunder for *Jonah* and the *whale.*—Theobald.

utterly spoil our play, and make it to be hissed; and it cost money; you will not suffer us to go on with our plot. I pray, gentlemen, rule him!

"*Cit.* Let him come now and dispatch this, and I'll trouble you no more.

"*Boy.* Will you give me your hand of that?

"*Wife.* Give him thy hand, George, do; and I'll kiss him. I warrant thee the youth means plainly.

"*Boy.* I'll send him to you presently.

[*Exit Boy.*

"*Wife.* I thank you, little youth. 'Faith, the child hath a sweet breath, George; but I think it be troubled with the worms; Carduus Benedictus and mare's milk were the only thing in the world for't.—Oh, Ralph's here, George! God send thee good luck, Ralph!"

SCENE IV.

Before a Barber's Shop in Waltham.

Enter RALPH, *Host,* TIM, *and* GEORGE.

Host. Puissant knight, yonder his mansion is.
Lo, where the spear and copper bason are!
Behold that string on which hangs many a tooth,[*]

[*] *Behold that string on which hangs many a tooth.*] The barbers anciently displayed the teeth which they had drawn on a string or chain, which they sometimes wore about their persons. In the ro-

Drawn from the gentle jaw of wand'ring knights!
I dare not stay to sound; he will appear. [*Exit.*

Ralph. Oh, faint not, heart! Susan, my lady dear,
The cobler's maid in Milk-Street, for whose sake
I take these arms, oh, let the thought of thee
Carry thy knight through all adventurous deeds;
And, in the honour of thy beauteous self,
May I destroy this monster Barbaroso!—
Knock, squire, upon the bason, till it break
With the shrill strokes, or till the giant speak.
[TIM *knocks upon the bason.*

Enter Barber.

"*Wife.* Oh, George, the giant, the giant! Now, Ralph, for thy life!"

Bar. What fond unknowing wight is this, that dares
So rudely knock at Barbaroso's cell,
Where no man comes, but leaves his fleece behind?

Ralph. I, traiterous caitiff, who am sent by Fate
To punish all the sad enormities

mance of Otuel, that champion having laid bare his adversary's jaw by a stroke of his faulchion, thus gibes him, v. 1311:

—"Clarel, so mote thou thè,
Why sheuwestou thi teth to me?
I n' am no *toth drawere!*
Thou ne sest me no *cheine bere.*"

The chain alludes, most probably, to a string worn by the barbers at the time, composed of the teeth they had drawn; and Cleveland, in his celebrated satire, entitled "The Rebel Scot," speaking of their national disposition to be mercenary soldiers, says,

"Nature with Scots as tooth-drawers has dealt,
Who use to hang their sword upon their belt."

See also Lazarillo's lamentation in The Woman-Hater, vol. X. p. 74.—From Southey's Letters from Spain, it seems that the practice is still prevalent in that country.

Thou hast committed against ladies gent,
And errant-knights, traitor to God and men!
Prepare thyself; this is the dismal hour
Appointed for thee to give strict account
Of all thy beastly treacherous villanies.

Bar. Fool-hardy knight, full soon thou shalt aby
This fond reproach: Thy body will I bang;
[*He takes down his pole.*
And lo! upon that string thy teeth shall hang.
Prepare thyself, for dead soon shalt thou be.

Ralph. Saint George for me! [*They fight.*

Bar. Gargantua for me!

" *Wife.* To him, Ralph, to him! hold up the giant; set out thy leg before, Ralph!

" *Cit.* Falsify a blow, Ralph, falsify a blow! the giant lies open on the left side.

" *Wife.* Bear't off, bear't off still: There, boy.--- Oh, Ralph's almost down, Ralph's almost down!"

Ralph. Susan, inspire me! now have up again.

" *Wife.* Up, up, up, up, up! so, Ralph! down with him, down with him, Ralph!

" *Cit.* Fetch him o'er the hip, boy!

[Ralph *knocks down the Barber.*

" *Wife.* There, boy! kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, Ralph!

" *Cit.* No, Ralph; get all out of him first."

Ralph. Presumptuous man! see to what desperate end
Thy treachery hath brought thee: The just gods,
Who never prosper those that do despise them,
For all the villanies which thou hast done
To knights and ladies, now have paid thee home,
By my stiff arm, a knight adventurous.
But say, vile wretch, before I send thy soul
To sad Avernus, (whither it must go)
What captives holdst thou in thy sable cave?

Bar. Go in, and free them all; thou hast the day.

Ralph. Go, squire and dwarf, search in this dreadful cave,
And free the wretched prisoners from their bonds.
[*Exeunt* TIM *and* GEORGE.

Bar. I crave for mercy, as thou art a Knight,
And scorn'st to spill the blood of those that beg.

Ralph. Thou shew'd'st no mercy, nor shalt thou have any;
Prepare thyself, for thou shalt surely die.

Enter TIM *leading one winking, with a Bason under his Chin, as prepared for shaving.*

Tim. Behold, brave Knight, here is one prisoner,
Whom this vile man hath used as you see.[a]

" *Wife.* This is the first wise word I heard the squire speak."

Ralph. Speak what thou art, and how thou hast been used,

[a] *Whom this* wild *man.*] Though all the copies agree in this reading, it is yet highly probable that a corruption has taken place here. Inhumanity and barbarity are the characteristics this giant is distinguished by, and as such I would have what I take to be the right lection restored, and make the line run thus,

Whom this vilde *man,* &c.

Vilde for *vile* is the common lection both in Shakspeare and Spenser, and I am surprised that the great Oxford editor of Shakspeare should so frequently (I believe universally) alter this reading in his fine edition of that poet into the modern *vile.*—Sympson.

We cannot conceive why Mr Sympson should be surprised at this: himself confesses that it is only modernizing the orthography; and if that is not allowable in this word, why is it in any other?—Ed. 1778.

" The great Oxford editor of Shakspeare," as Seward calls Sir Thomas Hanmer, was perhaps the worst, and certainly the boldest and rashest editor that any poet ever had.

That I may give him condign punishment.[3]

1 *Knight.* I am a Knight that took my journey post
Northward from London; and, in courteous wise,
This giant trained me to his loathsome den,
Under pretence of killing of the itch;
And all my body with a powder strewed,
That smarts and stings; and cut away my beard,
And my curl'd locks, wherein were ribands tied;[4]
And with a water wash'd my tender eyes,
(Whilst up and down about me still he skipt)
Whose virtue is, that till my eyes be wiped
With a dry cloth, for this my foul disgrace,
I shall not dare to look a dog i' th' face.

"*Wife.* Alas, poor Knight! Relieve him, Ralph; relieve poor knights, whilst you live."

Ralph. My trusty Squire, convey him to the town,
Where he may find relief. Adieu, fair Knight!

[*Exeunt Knight and* TIM.

Enter GEORGE, *leading one with a Patch over his Nose.*

George. Puissant Knight, o' th' Burning Pestle hight,
See here another wretch, whom this foul beast
Hath scotch'd[5] and scored in this inhuman wise.

[3] *That that I may give condign punishment.*] Corrected in 1635.

[4] *And my curl'd* locks, *wherein were* ribands *tied.*] In this fantastical manner the gallants of the time attired their hair, and the practice was strongly inveighed against by the puritans.

[5] Scorch'd *and scored.*] The account that the Knight, here handed out by the Dwarf, gives of himself a little after, makes much against the reading of *scorch'd*, but naturally agrees with the alteration Mr Theobald and myself have advanced.—*Sympson.*

Ralph. Speak me thy name, and eke thy place of birth,
And what hath been thy usage in this cave.

2 Knight. I am a Knight, Sir Pockhole is my name,
And by my birth I am a Londoner,
Free by my copy, but my ancestors
Were Frenchmen all;[6] and riding hard this way,
Upon a trotting horse, my bones did ache;
And I, faint Knight, to ease my weary limbs,
Lit at this cave; when straight this furious fiend,
With sharpest instrument of purest steel,
Did cut the gristle of my nose away,
And in the place this velvet plaister stands:
Relieve me, gentle Knight, out of his hands!

" *Wife.* Good Ralph, relieve Sir Pockhole, and send him away; for in truth his breath stinks."

Ralph. Convey him straight after the other Knight.—
Sir Pockhole, fare you well!

2 Knight. Kind sir, good night!
[*Exit with* GEORGE.

Man. [*Within.*] Deliver us! [*Cries within.*

Woman. [*Within.*] Deliver us!

" *Wife.* Hark, George, what a woful cry there is! I think some woman lies-in there."

Man. [*Within.*] Deliver us!

Woman. [*Within.*] Deliver us!

Ralph. What ghastly noise is this? speak, Barbaroso;
Or, by this blazing steel, thy head goes off!

Bar. Prisoners of mine, whom I in diet keep.

6 —— *my ancestors*
Were Frenchmen all.] Alluding to the name of the knight. It should be remembered, that the occupation of a surgeon was at the time joined to that of a barber.

Send lower down into the cave,
And in a tub that's heated smoking hot,[7]
There they may find them, and deliver them.

Ralph. Run, Squire and Dwarf; deliver them with speed. [*Exeunt* TIM *and* GEORGE.

"*Wife.* But will not Ralph kill this giant? Surely I am afraid, if he let him go he will do as much hurt as ever he did.

"*Cit.* Not so, mouse, neither, if he could convert him.

"*Wife.* Ay, George, if he could convert him; but a giant is not so soon converted as one of us ordinary people. There's a pretty tale of a witch, that had the devil's mark about her, (God bless us!) that had a giant to her son, that was called Lob-lie-by-the-fire;[8] didst never hear it, George?

[7] *And in a tub that's heated smoking hot.*] This alludes to the diet used for patients afflicted with the venereal disease, while under a course of guiacum. So in Timon of Athens:—

> "Be a whore still! they love thee not that use thee;
> Give them diseases, leaving thee their lust,
> Make use of thy salt hours: season the slaves
> For *tubs* and baths; bring down rose-cheeked youth
> To the *tub-fast and the diet.*"

What the diet of the patients under this regimen was may be learned from the context.

[8] *Lob-lie-by-the-fire.*] *Lob,* as Dr Johnson observes, as well as *lubber, looby, lobcock,* denotes inactivity of body, and dulness of mind. It was commonly used as a term of contempt. The Fairy in Midsummer Night's Dream calls Puck, "thou *lob* of spirits." Mr Warton, commenting on the following lines of Milton's L'Allegro,—

> "Tells how the drudging goblin sweat,
> To earn his cream-bowl duly set, - - - -
> Then lies him down, *the lubbar-fiend,*"

observes, that "Robin Goodfellow, who is here made a gigantic spirit, fond of lying by the fire, and called the *lubbar-fiend,* seems to be confounded with the sleepy giant mentioned in the Knight of the Burning Pestle."—It seems not improbable that both Flet-

Enter TIM, *leading Third Knight, with a Glass of Lotion in his Hand, and* GEORGE *leading a Woman, with Diet-bread and Drink.*

" *Cit.* Peace, Nell; here comes the prisoners."
George. Here be these pined wretches, manful Knight,
That for this six weeks have not seen a wight.
Ralph. Deliver what you are, and how you came
To this sad cave, and what your usage was?
3 *Knight.* I am an errant Knight[7] that followed arms,

cher and Milton had the following passage in Spenser's Fairy Queen, (Book VII. Canto VII.) in view:

" There in a gloomy hollow glen she found
A little cottage built of stickes and reedes,
In homely wise, and wald with sods around;
In which a witch did dwell, in loathly weedes
And wilfull want, all careless of her needes;
So choosing solitarie to abide
Far from all neighbours, that her divelish deedes
And hellish arts from people she might hide,
And hurt far off unknowne whomever she envide---

This wicked woman had a wicked sonne,
The comfort of her age and weary dayes,
A laesy loord, for nothing good to donne,
But stretched forth in ydlenesse alwayes,
Ne ever cast his mind to covet prayse,
Or ply himself to any honest trade;
But all the day before the sunny rayes
He used to slug, or sleepe in slothfull shade:
Such laesiness both lewde and poor att once him made."

From the same source Kirke perhaps took the idea of Calib, the lazy, clownish son of the witch by the devil, who is not mentioned in Richard Johnson's popular romance on the same subject.

[7] Man. *I am an errant* Knight.] Surely then this character should be called THIRD *Knight*, as well as the others FIRST and SECOND *Knights.*—M. R.

With spear and shield; and in my tender years
I stricken was with Cupid's fiery shaft,
And fell in love with this my lady dear,
And stole her from her friends in Turnbull-street,[8]
And bore her up and down from town to town,
Where we did eat and drink, and music hear;
Till at the length at this unhappy town
We did arrive, and coming to this cave,
This beast us caught, and put us in a tub,
Where we this two months sweat, and should have done
Another month, if you had not relieved us.
Woman. This bread and water hath our diet been,
Together with a rib cut from a neck
Of burned mutton; hard hath been our fare!
Release us from this ugly giant's snare!
3 *Knight.* This hath been all the food[9] we have received;
But only twice a-day, for novelty,
He gave a spoonful of this hearty broth
To each of us, through this same slender quill.
[*Pulls out a Syringe.*
Ralph. From this infernal monster you shall go,
That useth knights and gentle ladies so.

[8] *Turnbull-street.*] A street very notorious for its brothels at the time, and often alluded to in old plays. So in Brome's Antipodes—"Go with thy flesh to *Turnbull* shambles!" Again, in Davenport's New Trick to cheat the Devil, it is mentioned with other haunts of ill fame:—

"Search the allies, Spittal, or Pickthatch,
Turnbull, the Bankside, or the Minories,
Whitefriars, St Peter's-street, and Mutton-lane;
So thou canst find one to disgrace thy sex,
She best shall please my palate."

[9] All *the food.*] The second quarto reads *half* the food.

Convey them hence.

[*Exeunt Third Knight and Woman.*

" *Cit.* Cony, I can tell thee the gentlemen like Ralph.

" *Wife.* Ay, George, I see it well enough. Gentlemen, I thank you all heartily for gracing my man Ralph; and I promise you, you shall see him oftener."

Bar. Mercy, great Knight! I do recant my ill,
And henceforth never gentle blood will spill.

Ralph. I give thee mercy; but yet shalt thou swear
Upon my Burning Pestle, to perform
Thy promise uttered.

Bar. I swear and kiss. [*Kisses the Pestle.*

Ralph. Depart then, and amend!—
Come, Squire and Dwarf; the sun grows towards his set,
And we have many more adventures yet.

[*Exeunt.*

" *Cit.* Now Ralph is in this humour, I know he would ha' beaten all the boys in the house, if they had been set on him.

" *Wife.* Ay, George, but it is well as it is: I warrant you the gentlemen do consider what it is to overthrow a giant.

SCENE V.

The Street before Merrythought's *House.*

Enter Mrs MERRYTHOUGHT *and* MICHAEL.

"But look, George; here comes mistress Merrythought, and her son Michael: Now you are welcome, mistress Merrythought; now Ralph has done, you may go on."

Mrs Mer. Micke, my boy?

Mich. Ay, forsooth, mother!

Mrs Mer. Be merry, Micke; we are at home now; where I warrant you, you shall find the house flung out of the windows. [*Singing above.*] Hark! hey dogs, hey! this is the old world i'faith with my husband: [If][1] I get in among them, I'll play them such a lesson, that they shall have little list to come scraping hither again!—Why, master Merrythought! husband! Charles Merrythought!

Mer. [Singing at the Window above.]

If you will sing, and dance, and laugh,
And hollow, and laugh again!
And then cry, " there boys, there ;" why then,
One, two, three, and four,
We shall be merry within this hour.

[1] *If.*] The insertion of this monosyllable, proposed by Mason, is warranted by the first quarto.

Mrs Mer. Why, Charles! do you not know your own natural wife? I say, open the door, and turn me out those mangy companions; 'tis more than time that they were fellow and fellow-like with you: You are a gentleman, Charles, and an old man, and father of two children; and I myself, (though I say it) by my mother's side, niece to a worshipful gentleman, and a conductor; he has been three times in his majesty's service at Chester; and is now the fourth time, God bless him, and his charge, upon his journey.

Mer. [Singing.] *Go from my window, love, go;*[a]
Go from my window, my dear:
The wind and the rain
Will drive you back again,
You cannot be lodged here.

Hark you, mistress Merrythought, you that walk upon adventures, and forsake your husband, because he sings with never a penny in his purse; what, shall I think myself the worse? 'Faith no, I'll be merry. [*Singing.*

You come not here, here's none but lads of mettle,
Lives of a hundred years, and upwards,
Care never drunk their bloods, nor want made them warble
'Hey-ho, my heart is heavy.'

Mrs Mer. Why, master Merrythought, what am I, that you should laugh me to scorn thus abruptly? am I not your fellow-feeler, as we may

[a] *Go from my window,* &c.] A fragment of an old song very popular at the time, being again quoted in the Woman's Prize and Monsieur Thomas. See vol. V. p. 279, VI. 491.

say, in all our miseries? your comforter in health and sickness? have I not brought you children? are they not like you, Charles? Look upon thine own image, hard-hearted man! and yet for all this——

Mer. [Singing.] *Begone, begone, my juggy, my puggy,*
Begone, my love, my dear!
The weather is warm,
'Twill do thee no harm;
Thou canst not be lodged here.

Be merry, boys! some light music, and more wine! [*Exit from above.*

"*Wife.* He's not in earnest, I hope, George, is he?

"*Cit.* What if he be, sweetheart?

"*Wife.* Marry, if he be, George, I'll make bold to tell him he's an ingrant old man,[3] to use his bedfellow so scurvily.

"*Cit.* What! how does he use her, honey?

"*Wife.* Marry come up, Sir Saucebox! I think you'll take his part, will you not? Lord, how hot you are grown! you are a fine man, an you had a fine dog; it becomes you sweetly!

"*Cit.* Nay, pr'ythee, Nell, chide not; for as I am an honest man, and a true Christian grocer, I do not like his doings.

"*Wife.* I cry you mercy then, George! you know we are all frail, and full of infirmities.—D'ye hear, master Merrythought? may I crave a word with you?"

[3] *Ingrant.*] Is the reading of all the copies but that of 1711, which exhibits *ignorant;* of which word it may be a vitiation, as *ingrum* is in Wit without Money, (see vol. II. p. 107.) *Ingrant* here seems to stand for *ingrateful.*—Ed. 1778.

Mer. [*At the Window.*] Strike up, lively lads!

" *Wife.* I had not thought in truth, master Merrythought, that a man of your age and discretion, as I may say, being a gentleman, and therefore known by your gentle conditions, could have used so little respect to the weakness of his wife: For your wife is your own flesh, the staff of your age, your yoke-fellow, with whose help you draw through the mire of this transitory world; nay, she's your own rib. And again——"

Mer. [Singing.] *I come not hither for thee to teach,*
I have no pulpit for thee to preach,
I would thou hadst kiss'd me under the breech,
As thou art a lady gay.

" *Wife.* Marry, with a vengeance, I am heartily sorry for the poor gentlewoman! but if I were thy wife, i'faith, grey beard, i'faith——

" *Cit.* I pr'ythee, sweet honeysuckle, be content!

" *Wife.* Give me such words, that am a gentlewoman born? hang him, hoary rascal! Get me some drink, George; I am almost molten with fretting: Now beshrew his knave's heart for it!"

[*Citizen exit.*

Mer. Play me a light lavalto.[4] Come, be frolic; fill the good fellows wine!

Mrs Mer. Why, master Merrythought, are you disposed to make me wait here? You'll open, I hope; I'll fetch them that shall open else.

Mer. Good woman, if you will sing, I'll give you something; if not——

[4] *Play me a light* lavalto.] Lavolta was the name of a lively dance, somewhat resembling a German *waltz*. See vol. XI. p. 441.

You are no love for me, Marg'ret,
I am no love for you.[5]

Come aloft, boys, aloft![6] [*Exit from the Window.*

Mrs Mer. Now a churl's fart in your teeth, sir! Come, Micke, we'll not trouble him; a' shall not ding us i' th' teeth with his bread and his broth, that he shall not. Come, boy; I'll provide for thee, I warrant thee: We'll go to master Venterwels, the merchant; I'll get his letter to mine host of the Bell in Waltham; there I'll place thee with the tapster; will not that do well for thee, Micke? and let me alone for that old cuckoldly knave your father! I'll use him in his kind, I warrant you! [*Exeunt.*

FINIS ACTUS TERTII.

Re-enter Citizen with Beer.

" *Wife.* Come, George; where's the beer?
" *Cit.* Here, love!
" *Wife.* This old fornicating fellow will not out of my mind yet. Gentlemen, I'll begin to you all;

[5] *You are no love, &c.*] These lines are to be found in Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry, vol. III. p. 120.—Ed. 1778.

They do not occur in the ballad of William and Margaret. See act II. sc. IV.

[6] *Come aloft, boys, aloft.*] This line has hitherto been printed as part of the *song*; to which we cannot think it belongs.—Ed. 1778.

To *come aloft* means to tumble. The phrase occurs also in Monsieur Thomas.—*Mason.*

Again in Massinger's Bondman, Gracculo says to Asotus, whom he leads in an ape's habit, with a chain about his neck—

——— " I'll teach you
To *come aloft* and do tricks like an ape."

and I desire more of your acquaintance with all my heart. Fill the gentlemen some beer, George. [*Boy danceth.*] Look, George, the little boy's come again! methinks he looks something like the Prince of Orange in his long stocking, if he had a little harness about his neck.[7] George, I will have him dance Fading; Fading is a fine jig,[8] I'll assure you, gentlemen. Begin, brother; now a' capers, sweetheart! now a turn a' th' toe, and then tumble! Cannot you tumble, youth?

" *Boy.* No, indeed, forsooth.

" *Wife.* Nor eat fire?

" *Boy.* Neither.

" *Wife.* Why then, I thank you heartily; there's twopence to buy you points[9] withal."

[7] *Methinks he looks something like the* Prince of Orange *in his long stocking, if he had a little harness about his neck.*] Harness means armour. So Macbeth says—

" At least I'll die with *harness* on my back."—*Mason.*

[8] Fading; fading *is a fine jig.*] This dance is mentioned by Ben Jonson, in the Irish Masque at Court: " Daunsh a *fading* at te vedding;" and again, " Show tee how teye can foot te *fading* and te fadow."—Ed. 1778.

It seems to have been the burden of a ballad as well as a dance. Hence the word *jig* in the text, which should be understood in its ancient sense, *viz.* song or ballad. In this sense *fading* is also to be taken in Shakspeare's Winter's Tale: " He has the prettiest *love-songs* for maids; so without bawdry, which is strange; with such delicate burdens of dildos and *fadings*: jump her and thump her," &c. Here, as well as in the text, the ballad is alluded to, not the dance, as Tyrwhitt and Steevens seem to think.

[9] *Points.*] These were either laces with metal tags to them, or metal hooks to keep up the breeches; probably the latter.

ACT IV.[1] SCENE I.

A Street.

Enter Jasper *and Boy.*

Jasp. There, boy; deliver this: But do it well.
Hast thou provided me four lusty fellows,
Able to carry me? and art thou perfect
In all thy business?
Boy. Sir, you need not fear;
I have my lesson here, and cannot miss it:
The men are ready for you, and what else
Pertains to this employment.
Jasp. There, my boy;
Take it, but buy no land.
Boy. 'Faith, sir, 'twere rare
To see so young a purchaser. I fly,
And on my wings carry your destiny. [*Exit.*
Jasp. Go, and be happy! Now, my latest hope,
Forsake me not, but fling thy anchor out,
And let it hold! Stand fix'd, thou rolling stone,
Till I enjoy my dearest! Hear me, all
You powers, that rule in men, celestial! [*Exit.*
"*Wife.* Go thy ways; thou art as crooked a

[1] *Act* IV.] All the copies concur in making this *act* begin with the *Boy's dancing;* but as the *dance* was certainly introduced by way of interlude, here as well as at the end of the first act, we have made this *act* begin with a part of the real play, as all the others do.—Ed. 1778.

sprig as ever grew in London! I warrant him, he'll come to some naughty end or other; for his looks say no less: Besides, his father (you know, George) is none of the best; you heard him take me up like a flirt-gill,[2] and sing bawdy songs upon me; but i'faith, if I live, George——

" *Cit.* Let me alone, sweetheart! I have a trick in my head shall lodge him in the Arches for one year,[3] and make him sing *peccavi*, ere I leave him; and yet he shall never know who hurt him neither.

" *Wife.* Do, my good George, do!

" *Cit.* What shall we have Ralph do now, Boy?

" *Boy.* You shall have what you will, sir.

" *Cit.* Why, so, sir; go and fetch me him then, and let the sophy of Persia come and christen him a child.

" *Boy.* Believe me, sir, that will not do so well; 'tis stale; it has been had before at the Red Bull.[4]

" *Wife.* George, let Ralph travel over great hills, and let him be very weary, and come to the king of Cracovia's house, covered with [black] velvet,[5] and there let the king's daughter stand

[2] *Flirt-gill.*] The second quarto reads—*gill-flirt.*

[3] *I have a trick shall lodge him in the Arches for one year,* &c.] Information in the prerogative court.

[4] *The* Red Bull.] The *Red Bull* was one of the playhouses in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. It was situated in St John's Street.—*Reed.* See the next note but two.

[5] *Cracovia's house covered with velvet.*] I have inserted the *colour* of the *velvet*, which was here wanting, from what the Boy says, in the second speech below, as to the impossibility of their complying with the request of the Citizen's Wife,

But we can't present an house covered with black *velvet.*—Sympson.

The text probably refers to some contemporary romance of the Amadis school.

in her window all in beaten gold, combing her golden locks with a comb of ivory; and let her spy Ralph, and fall in love with him, and come down to him, and carry him into her father's house, and then let Ralph talk with her!

"*Cit.* Well said, Nell; it shall be so: Boy, let's ha't done quickly.

"*Boy.* Sir, if you will imagine all this to be done already, you shall hear them talk together; but we cannot present a house covered with black velvet, and a lady in beaten gold.

"*Cit.* Sir Boy, let's ha't as you can then.

"*Boy.* Besides, it will shew ill-favouredly to have a grocer's prentice to court a king's daughter.

"*Cit.* Will it so, sir? You are well read in histories! I pray you, what was Sir Dagonet?[6] Was not he prentice to a grocer in London? Read the play of the Four Prentices of London,[7] where they

[6] *Sir Dagonet.*] In the second part of Shakspeare's Henry IV. act III. sc. IV., this character is mentioned by Justice Shallow: "I remember at Mile-End Green, when I lay at Clement's Inn, I was *Sir Dagonet* in Arthur's Show;" upon which Mr Warton remarks, "Arthur's Show seems to have been a theatrical representation made out of the old romance of Morte Arthure, the most popular one of our author's age. *Sir Dagonet* is king Arthur's squire."—Ed. 1778.

Mr Warton is here completely mistaken. Sir Dagonet is not king Arthur's squire, but his fool. Again, Arthur's Show was not a theatrical representation, but an exhibition of archery, as has been proved in a note by the Rev. Mr Bowles, printed in Malone's edition of Shakspeare. The mistake of tracing Sir Dagonet's origin to a grocer's shop in London, was no doubt purposely put into the citizen's mouth.

[7] *The Four Prentices of London.*] The commentators on Beaumont and Fletcher's Knight of the Burning Pestle have not observed that the design of that play is founded upon a comedy called, "The Four Prentices of London, with the Conquest of Jerusalem; as it hath been diverse Times acted at the Red Bull, by

toss their pikes so. I pray you fetch him in, sir, fetch him in!

"*Boy.* It shall be done.—It is not our fault, gentlemen. [*Exit.*

the Queen's Majesty's Servants. Written by Tho. Heywood, 1612." For as in Beaumont and Fletcher's play a grocer in the Strand turns knight-errant, making his apprentice his squire, &c. so in Heywood's play four apprentices accoutre themselves as knights, and go to Jerusalem in quest of adventures. One of them, the most important character, is a goldsmith, another a grocer, another a mercer, and a fourth an haberdasher. But Beaumont and Fletcher's play, though founded upon it, contains many satirical strokes against Heywood's comedy; the force of which is entirely lost to those who have not seen that comedy. Thus in Beaumont and Fletcher's Prologue, or first scene, a citizen is introduced declaring that, in the play, he "will have a grocer, and he shall do admirable things." Again act I. scene I. Ralph says, "Amongst all the worthy books of atchievements, I do not call to mind that I have yet read of a grocer-errant: I will be the said knight. Have you heard of any that hath wandered unfurnished of his squire and dwarf? My elder prentice Tim shall be my trusty squire, and George my dwarf." In the following passage the allusion to Heywood's comedy is demonstrably manifest, act IV. scene I.—

"*Boy.* It will shew ill-favouredly to have a grocer's prentice court a king's daughter.

"*Cit.* Will it so, sir? You are well read in histories; I pray you who was Sir Dagonet? Was he not prentice to a grocer in London? Read the play of *The Four Prentices*, where they toss their pikes so."

In Heywood's comedy, Eustace the grocer's prentice is introduced courting the daughter of the king of France; and in the frontispiece the four prentices are represented in armour tilting with javelins. Immediately before the last quoted speeches we have the following instances of allusion:—

"*Cit.* Let the Sophy of Persia come and christen him a child.

"*Boy.* Believe me, sir, that will not do so well; 'tis flat; it has been before at the Red Bull."

A circumstance in Heywood's comedy, which, as has been already specified, was acted at the Red Bull. Beaumont and Fletcher's play is pure burlesque. Heywood's is a mixture of the

" *Wife.* Now we shall see fine doings, I warrant thee, George.

droll and serious, and was evidently intended to ridicule the reigning fashion of reading romances.—*Warton.*

There is no doubt a sophy of Persia in Heywood's play, but his christening a child is merely a ludicrous confusion of the foolish citizen. From Mr Warton's opinion, (which has lately been revived by a reviewer under the strange mistake of Warton's having denied the hypothesis, though it was he who first broached it,) that the Four Prentices of London were intended to ridicule the romances of knight-errantry I must entirely dissent. There is nothing which indicates in any degree such an intention; it is perfectly in the style of the plays fashionable about the years 1596 and 1597, when it was first produced; the admixture of drollery is even less than in most of the serious dramas of the time, and we might with equal justice suppose Tamburlain or the Spanish Tragedy to have been designed as burlesques. Honest Heywood no doubt intended the play as a serious compliment to the city apprentices, to whom he dedicated it, on being forced to publish it at a time when he seems to have been somewhat ashamed of the production, thinking it necessary to excuse it by telling the reader, that as plays were at the time it was first brought on the stage, it was in the fashion and usual costume. The hypothesis of Warton and the reviewer is exactly similar to that of Nasarre, an editor of the plays of Cervantes, who, in order to excuse their defects, formed the extravagant idea that they were intended as burlesques on the comedies of Lope de Vega and his contemporaries. Had Heywood in that drama, or Cervantes in his plays, formed any such intention, as the latter in his Don Quixote, and Beaumont and Fletcher in the present play, undoubtedly did, they would have set about the matter in a very different and quite unequivocal manner.

SCENE II.

A Hall in the King of Moldavia's Court.

Enter RALPH, TIM, GEORGE, *and* POMPIONA.

"Oh, here they come! How prettily the king of Cracovia's daughter is dressed!

"*Cit.* Ay, Nell, it is the fashion of that country, I warrant thee."

Pomp. Welcome, Sir Knight, unto my father's court,
King of Moldavia;[8] unto me, Pompiona,
His daughter dear! But sure you do not like
Your entertainment, that will stay with us
No longer but a night.

Ralph. Damsel right fair,
I am on many sad adventures bound,

[8] *King of Moldavia.*] The present scene is probably founded upon one of the numerous Spanish romances in the library of Don Quixote, and very popular in England at the time. In Ben Jonson's Silent Woman there is a similar allusion, perhaps referring to the same romance:

"*La-Foole.* He has his box of instruments.

Clerimont. Like a surgeon!

La-F. For the mathematics: his square, his compasses, his brass pens, and black-lead, to draw maps of every place and person where he comes.

Cle. How, maps of persons?

La-F. Yes, sir, of Pomentack, when he was here, and of the prince of Moldavia, and of his mistress, mistress Epicæne."

That call me forth into the wilderness:
Besides, my horse's back is something gall'd,[9]
Which will enforce me ride a sober pace.
But many thanks, fair lady, be to you,
For using errant-Knight with courtesy!

Pomp. But say, brave Knight, what is your name and birth?

Ralph. My name is Ralph, I am an Englishman,
(As true as steel, a hearty Englishman)
And prentice to a grocer in the Strond,
By deed indent, of which I have one part:
But Fortune calling me to follow arms,
On me this holy order I did take
Of Burning Pestle, which in all men's eyes
I bear, confounding ladies' enemies.

Pomp. Oft have I heard of your brave countrymen,
And fertile soil, and store of wholesome food;
My father oft will tell me of a drink
In England found, and Nipitato[1] call'd,
Which driveth all the sorrow from your hearts.

Ralph. Lady, 'tis true; you need not lay your lips
To better Nipitato than there is.

Pomp. And of a wild-fowl he will often speak,
Which powder'd beef and mustard called is:
For there have been great wars 'twixt us and you;
But truly, Ralph, it was not long of me.

[9] *Besides, my horse's back is something gall'd,*
Which will enforce me ride a sober pace.] This is one of the most sensible apologies ever urged in romance.

[1] *Nipitato.*] This liquor, the nature of which I am unable to explain, is thus mentioned in Davenport's New Trick to cheat the Devil:—

"A cup of *nipsitate* brisk and neat;
The drawers call it tickle-brain."

Tell me then, Ralph, could you contented be
To wear a lady's favour in your shield?

Ralph. I am a knight of a religious order,
And will not wear a favour of a lady
That trusts in Antichrist, and false traditions.

"*Cit.* Well said, Ralph! convert her, if thou canst."

Ralph. Besides, I have a lady of my own
In merry England; for whose virtuous sake
I took these arms; and Susan is her name,
A cobler's maid in Milk-street; whom I vow
Ne'er to forsake, whilst life and Pestle last.

Pomp. Happy that cobbling dame, whoe'er she be,
That for her own, dear Ralph, hath gotten thee!
Unhappy I, that ne'er shall see the day
To see thee more, that bear'st my heart away!

Ralph. Lady, farewell! I needs must take my leave.

Pomp. Hard-hearted Ralph, that ladies dost deceive!

"*Cit.* Hark thee, Ralph! there's money for thee: Give something in the king of Cracovia's house; be not beholding to him."

Ralph. Lady, before I go, I must remember
Your father's officers, who, truth to tell,
Have been about me very diligent:
Hold up thy snowy hand, thou princely maid!
There's twelve-pence for your father's chamberlain;
And there's another shilling for his cook,
For, by my troth, the goose was roasted well;
And twelve-pence for your father's horse-keeper,
For 'nointing my horse-back, and for his butter[a]

[a] *Butter.*] Mason says we should read *butler*, "as Seward does." But the edition of 1750, and every other, reads as in the text, and

There is another shilling; to the maid
That wash'd my boot-hose, there's an English groat;
And two-pence to the boy that wiped my boots!
And, last, fair lady, there is for yourself
Three-pence, to buy you pins at Bumbo-fair!

Pomp. Full many thanks; and I will keep them safe
Till all the heads be off, for thy sake, Ralph.

Ralph. Advance, my Squire and Dwarf! I cannot stay.

Pomp. Thou kill'st my heart in parting thus away. [*Exeunt.*

"*Wife.* I commend Ralph yet, that he will not stoop to a Cracovian; there's properer women in London than any are there, I wis. But here comes master Humphrey and his love again; now, George!

"*Cit.* Ay, cony, peace!"

there is no occasion to alter it. Ralph gives an additional shilling for the butter used for his horse's back.—It may here be observed, that the vails given by Ralph are excessive, which was probably the real case at the time. At least the presents expected by the servants of king James from the foreign ambassadors, as mentioned in the Philoxenis of Sir John Finnet, are very considerable, and probably the custom extended in a proportionate degree to the houses of the gentry and citizens.

SCENE III.

The House of Venterwels.

Enter VENTERWELS, *Master* HUMPHREY, LUCE, *and Boy.*

Vent. Go, get you up! I will not be entreated!
And, gossip mine, I'll keep you sure hereafter
From gadding out again, with boys and unthrifts:
Come, they are women's tears; I know your fashion.—
Go, sirrah, lock her in, and keep the key
Safe as you love your life.[3]
[*Exeunt* LUCE *and Boy.*
Now, my son Humphrey,
You may both rest assured of my love
In this, and reap your own desire.
Hum. I see this love you speak of, through your daughter,
Although the hole be little; and hereafter
Will yield the like in all I may or can,

[3] *Safe as your life.*] We ought to read here, says the gentleman quoted so often above, thus,

Safe as you love your life.—Sympson.

The reader will probably be surprised at Sympson's saying, "quoted so OFTEN," when we have mentioned the gentleman so SELDOM: The cause is, the gentleman scarcely ever proposed a variation from the old books, but (as in the present case; for they exhibit the words *you love*) recommended *restorations* from them; which Sympson, from his wonderful inattention to the authorized copies, supposed were *corrections.*—Ed. 1778.

Fitting a Christian and a gentleman.
Vent. I do believe you, my good son, and thank you;
For 'twere an impudence to think you flatter'd.
Hum. It were indeed; but shall I tell you why?
I have been beaten twice about the lie.
Vent. Well, son, no more of compliment. My daughter
Is yours again; appoint the time and take her:
We'll have no stealing for it; I myself
And some few of our friends will see you married.
Hum. I would you would, i'faith! for be it known,
I ever was afraid to lie alone.
Vent. Some three days hence then——
Hum. Three days? let me see!
'Tis somewhat of the most; yet I agree,
Because I mean against the appointed day
To visit all my friends in new array.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, there's a gentlewoman without would speak with your worship.
Vent. What is she?
Serv. Sir, I ask'd her not.
Vent. Bid her come in.

Enter Mrs MERRYTHOUGHT *and* MICHAEL.

Mrs Mer. Peace be to your worship! I come as a poor suitor to you, sir, in the behalf of this child.
Vent. Are you not wife to Merrythought?
Mrs Mer. Yes, truly: 'Would I had ne'er seen his eyes! he has undone me and himself, and his children; and there he lives at home, and sings

and hoits, and revels among his drunken companions! but, I warrant you, where to get a penny to put bread in his mouth he knows not: And therefore, if it like your worship, I would entreat your letter to the honest host of the Bell in Waltham, that I may place my child under the protection of his tapster, in some settled course of life.

Vent. I'm glad the Heavens have heard my prayers! Thy husband,
When I was ripe in sorrows, laugh'd at me;
Thy son, like an unthankful wretch, I having
Redeem'd him from his fall, and made him mine,
To shew his love again, first stole my daughter,
Then wrong'd this gentleman; and, last of all,
Gave me that grief had almost brought me down
Unto my grave, had not a stronger hand
Relieved my sorrows: Go, and weep as I did,
And be unpitied; for I here profess
An everlasting hate to all thy name.

Mrs Mer. Will you so, sir? how say you by that? Come, Micke; let him keep his wind to cool his pottage! We'll go to thy nurse's, Micke; she knits silk stockings, boy, and we'll knit too, boy, and be beholding to none of them all.

[*Exit with* MICHAEL.

Enter a Boy with a Letter.

Boy. Sir, I take it you are the master of this house.

Vent. How then, Boy?

Boy. Then to yourself, sir, comes this letter.

Vent. From whom, my pretty boy?

Boy. From him that was your servant; but no more
Shall that name ever be, for he is dead!

Grief of your purchased anger broke his heart:
I saw him die, and from his hand received
This paper, with a charge to bringi hither:
Read it, and satisfy yourself in all.

Vent. [Reading.] *Sir, that I have wrong'd your love I must confess; in which I have purchased to myself, besides mine own undoing, the ill opinion of my friends. Let not your anger, good sir, outlive me, but suffer me to rest in peace with your forgiveness: Let my body (if a dying man may so much prevail with you) be brought to your daughter, that she may truly know my hot flames are now buried, and withal receive a testimony of the zeal I bore her virtue. Farewell for ever, and be ever happy!* JASPER.

God's hand is great in this! I do forgive him;
Yet I am glad he's quiet, where I hope
He will not bite again. Boy, bring the body,
And let him have his will, if that be all.

Boy. 'Tis here without, sir.

Vent. So, sir; if you please,
You may conduct it in; I do not fear it.

Hum. I'll be your usher, Boy; for, though I say it,
He owed me something once, and well did pay it.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

Another Room in the same House.

Enter LUCE.

Luce. If there be any punishment inflicted
Upon the miserable, more than yet I feel,
Let it together seize me, and at once
Press down my soul! I cannot bear the pain
Of these delaying tortures!—Thou that art
The end of all, and the sweet rest of all,
Come, come, oh, Death! bring me to thy peace,
And blot out all the memory I nourish
Both of my father and my cruel friend!
Oh, wretched maid, still living to be wretched,
To be a say[4] to Fortune in her changes,
And grow to number times and woes together!
How happy had I been, if, being born,
My grave had been my cradle!

Enter Servant.

Serv. By your leave,
Young mistress! Here's a boy hath brought a coffin;
What a' would say I know not; but your father
Charged me to give you notice. Here they come!

[4] *To be a* say.] *A say* seems corrupt; perhaps we should read, *assay.*—Ed. 1778.

A *say* means a sample or example.—*Mason.*

Enter two Men bearing a Coffin, and the Boy. JASPER *laid out as a Corpse within it, covered with a Cloth.*

Luce. For me I hope 'tis come, and 'tis most welcome.
Boy. Fair mistress, let me not add greater grief
To that great store you have already. Jasper,
(That whilst he lived was yours, now dead,
And here enclosed,) commanded me to bring
His body hither, and to crave a tear
From those fair eyes, (though he deserved not pity,)
To deck his funeral, for so he bid me
Tell her for whom he died.
Luce. He shall have many.—
Good friends, depart a little, whilst I take
My leave of this dead man, that once I loved.
[*Exeunt Coffin-carriers and Boy.*
Hold yet a little, life! and then I give thee
To thy first heavenly being. Oh, my friend!
Hast thou deceived me thus, and got before me?
I shall not long be after. But, believe me,
Thou wert too cruel, Jasper, 'gainst thyself,
In punishing the fault I could have pardon'd,
With so untimely death: Thou didst not wrong me,
But ever wert most kind, most true, most loving;
And I the most unkind, most false, most cruel!
Didst thou but ask a tear? I'll give thee all,
Even all my eyes can pour down, all my sighs,
And all myself, before thou goest from me:
These are but sparing rites; but if thy soul
Be yet about this place, and can behold
And see what I prepare to deck thee with,
It shall go up, borne on the wings of peace,
And satisfied: First will I sing thy dirge,

Then kiss thy pale lips, and then die myself,
And fill one coffin and one grave together.

SONG.

Come, you whose loves are dead,
And whiles I sing,
Weep, and wring
Every hand; and every head
Bind with cypress and sad yew;
Ribbons black and candles blue,
For him that was of men most true!

Come with heavy moaning,[5]
And on his grave
Let him have
Sacrifice of sighs and groaning;
Let him have fair flowers enow,
White and purple, green and yellow,
For him that was of men most true!

Thou sable cloth, sad cover of my joys,
I lift thee up, and thus I meet with death.
[*She takes off the Cloth, and he rises out of the Coffin.*

Jasp. And thus you meet the living.

Luce. Save me, Heaven!

Jasp. Nay, do not fly me, fair; I am no spirit:
Look better on me; do you know me yet?

Luce. Oh, thou dear shadow of my friend!

Jasp. Dear substance,
I swear I am no shadow; feel my hand!
It is the same it was; I am your Jasper,
Your Jasper that's yet living, and yet loving!
Pardon my rash attempt, my foolish proof

[5] *With heavy* mourning.] Amended in 1750.

I put in practice of your constancy:
For sooner should my sword have drunk my blood,
And set my soul at liberty, than drawn
The least drop from that body; for which boldness
Doom me to any thing! if death, I take it,
And willingly.

Luce. This death I'll give you for it!

[*Kisses him.*

So; now I'm satisfied, you are no spirit,
But my own truest, truest, truest friend!
Why do you come thus to me?

Jasp. First, to see you;
Then to convey you hence.

Luce. It cannot be;
For I am lock'd up here, and watch'd at all hours,
That 'tis impossible for me to 'scape.

Jasp. Nothing more possible: Within this coffin
Do you convey yourself; let me alone,
I have the wits of twenty men about me;
Only I crave the shelter of your closet
A little, and then fear me not. Creep in,
That they may presently convey you hence.
Fear nothing, dearest love! I'll be your second;
Lie close; so! all goes well yet.—Boy!

[*She goes into the Coffin, and he covers her with the Cloth.*

Re-enter Boy and Men.

Boy. At hand, sir.

Jasp. Convey away the coffin, and be wary.

Boy. 'Tis done already.

[*The Men carry out the Coffin.*

Jasp. Now must I go conjure.

[*Exit into a Closet.*

Enter VENTERWELS.

Vent. Boy, Boy!
Boy. Your servant, sir.
Vent. Do me this kindness, Boy; (hold; here's a crown)
Before thou bury the body of this fellow,
Carry it to his old merry father, and salute him
From me, and bid him sing; he hath cause.
Boy. I will, sir.
Vent. And then bring me word what tune he is in,
And have another crown; but do it truly.
I have fitted him a bargain, now, will vex him.
Boy. God bless your worship's health, sir!
Vent. Farewell, Boy! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

A Room in Merrythought's *House.*

Enter Old MERRYTHOUGHT.

" *Wife.* Ah, Old Merrythought, art thou there again? Let's hear some of thy songs."

Mer. [Singing.] *Who can sing a merrier note,*
Than he that cannot change a groat.

Not a denier left, and yet my heart leaps: I do

wonder yet, as old as I am, that any man will follow a trade, or serve, that may sing and laugh, and walk the streets. My wife and both my sons are I know not where; I have nothing left, nor know I how to come by meat to supper; yet am I merry still; for I know I shall find it upon the table at six o'clock; therefore, hang thought!
[*Sings.*

I would not be a serving-man
To carry the cloak-bag still,
Nor would I be a falconer
The greedy hawks to fill;
But I would be in a good house,
And have a good master too;
But I would eat and drink of the best,
And no work would I do.

This is it that keeps life and soul together, mirth! This is the philosopher's stone that they write so much on, that keeps a man ever young!

Enter a Boy.

Boy. Sir, they say they know all your money is gone, and they will trust you for no more drink.

Mer. Will they not? let 'em chuse! The best is, I have mirth at home, and need not send abroad for that; let them keep their drink to themselves. [*Sings.*

For Jillian of Berry[6] *she dwells on a hill,*
And she hath good beer and ale to sell,

[6] *Jillian of Berry.*] This is, perhaps, an error for Gillian of Brentford, a noted character of the sixteenth century. Among the

And of good fellows she thinks no ill,
And thither will we go now, now, now,
And thither will we go now.

And when you have made a little stay,
You need not ask what is to pay,
But kiss your hostess, and go your way,
And thither will we go now, now, now,
And thither will we go now.

Enter another Boy.

2 *Boy.* Sir, I can get no bread for supper.

Mer. Hang bread and supper! let's preserve our mirth, and we shall never feel hunger, I'll warrant you. Let's have a catch: Boy, follow me; come, sing this catch.

[*They sing the following Catch.*

Ho, ho, nobody at home,
Meat, nor drink, nor money ha' we none?
Fill the pot, Eedy,
Never more need I.

Mer. So, boys; enough. Follow me: Let's change our place, and we shall laugh afresh.

[*Exeunt.*

" *Wife.* Let him go, George; a' shall not have any countenance from us, nor a good word from any i' th' company, if I may strike stroke in't.

" *Cit.* No more a sha'not,* love. But, Nell, I will have Ralph do a very notable matter now, to the eternal honour and glory of all grocers.—Sirrah! you there! Boy! Can none of you hear?

Selden collection of black-letter Romances, there is one entitled—" Jyl of Brentford's Testament."

"*Boy.* Sir, your pleasure?

"*Cit.* Let Ralph come out on May-day in the morning, and speak upon a conduit, with all his scarfs about him, and his feathers, and his rings, and his knacks.[7]

"*Boy.* Why, sir, you do not think of our plot; what will become of that then?

"*Cit.* Why, sir, I care not what become on't! I'll have him come out, or I'll fetch him out myself; I'll have something done in honour of the city. Besides, he hath been long enough upon adventures: Bring him out quickly; or if I come in amongst you——

"*Boy.* Well, sir, he shall come out; but if our play miscarry, sir, you are like to pay for't.

[*Exit.*

"*Cit.* Bring him away then!

"*Wife.* This will be brave, i'faith! George, shall not he dance the morris too, for the credit of the Strand?

[7] *Let Ralph come out on May-day in the morning, and speak upon a conduit, with all his scarfs about him, and his feathers, and his rings, and his knacks.*] This incident was probably suggested by Eustace the grocer's apprentice, in Heywood's Four Prentices of London, the undoubted prototype of Ralph, who says—

> "He will not let me see a mustering,
> Nor in a May-day morning fetch in May."

We are informed by Stow, "that, in the month of May, the citizens of London, (of all estates,) lightly in every parish, or sometimes two or three parishes joining together, had their several Mayings, and did fetch in May-poles, with divers warlike shews, with good archers, morrice-dancers, and other pastimes, all day long; and towards the evening they had stage-plays and bonfires in the streets." In some parts of England, May-lords are still elected, and decked out with ribbands, scarfs, and rings. The last of these articles of ornament seems to have been peculiarly essential, as the citizen complains that Ralph "has not rings enough."—See also vol. IX. p. 344.

"*Cit.* No, sweetheart, it will be too much for the boy. Oh, there he is, Nell! he's reasonable well in reparrel; but he has not rings enough."

Enter RALPH, *dressed as a May-lord.*

Ralph. London, to thee I do present the merry month of May;
Let each true subject be content to hear me what I say:
For from the top of Conduit-Head, as plainly may appear,
I will both tell my name to you, and wherefore I came here.
My name is Ralph, by due descent, though not ignoble I,
Yet far inferior to the flock of gracious grocery;
And by the common counsel of my fellows in the Strand,
With gilded staff, and crossed scarf, the May-lord here I stand.
Rejoice, oh, English hearts, rejoice, rejoice, oh, lovers dear;
Rejoice, oh, city, town, and country, rejoice eke every shere!
For now the fragrant flowers do spring and sprout in seemly sort,
The little birds do sit and sing, the lambs do make fine sport;
And now the burchin-tree doth bud, that makes the schoolboy cry,
The morris rings, while hobby-horse[a] doth foot it feateously;

[a] *Hobby-horse.*] For a complete description of this essential character in a morris-dance, see vol. IX. p. 345, 346.

The lords and ladies now abroad, for their disport and play,
Do kiss sometimes upon the grass, and sometimes in the hay.
Now butter with a leaf of sage is good to purge the blood,
Fly Venus and phlebotomy, for they are neither good!
Now little fish on tender stone begin to cast their bellies,
And sluggish snails, that erst were mew'd,[9] do creep out of their shellies.
The rumbling rivers now do warm, for little boys to paddle;
The sturdy steed now goes to grass, and up they hang his saddle.
The heavy hart, the bellowing buck,[1] the rascal, and the pricket,[2]
Are now among the yeoman's pease, and leave the fearful thicket.
And be like them, oh, you, I say, of this same noble town,
And lift aloft your velvet heads, and slipping off your gown,

[9] *That erst were* mute.] Corrected by Sympson. The phrase is from falconry, and means, that the snails were first confined in their shells, as hawks in their mews.

[1] *The* blowing *buck.*] The first quarto reads *bellowing.* The judicious are left to their choice.—*Sympson.*
We cannot suppose any of the *judicious* will prefer *bellowing.*—Ed. 1778.
The text is right. An old inscription on Wantcliff Lodge testifies that it was first built for the pleasure of listening to "the hartis *bell.*"

[2] *The* rascal *and the* pricket.] In the Return from Parnassus, we are informed that a buck in the second year is called a *pricket.* *Rascals* are lean deer.

With bells on legs, and napkins clean, unto your shoulders tied,
With scarfs and garters as you please, and "hey for our town!" cried.[3]
March out and shew your willing minds, by twenty and by twenty,
To Hogsdon, or to Newington, where ale and cakes are plenty!
And let it ne'er be said for shame, that we the youths of London,
Lay thrumming of our caps at home, and left our custom undone.
Up then, I say, both young and old, both man and maid a-Maying,
With drums and guns that bounce aloud, and merry tabor playing!
Which to prolong, God save our king, and send his country peace,
And root out treason from the land! and so, my friends, I cease. [*Exit.*

FINIS ACTUS QUARTI.

[3] *And "hey for our town!" cried.*] A very usual exclamation at processions similar to the present. Butler uses the same expression in a passage where he probably recollected the text:

——"Followed with a world of tall lads,
That merry ditties troul'd and ballads,
Did ride with many a good-morrow,
Crying, *hey for our town*, through the borough."

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Room in the House of Venterwels.

Enter VENTERWELS.

'*Vent.* I will have no great store of company at the wedding; a couple of neighbours and their wives; and we will have a capon in stewed broth, with marrow, and a good piece of beef, stuck with rosemary.[4]

Enter JASPER, *his Face mealed.*

Jasp. Forbear thy pains, fond man! it is too late.
Vent. Heaven bless me! Jasper?
Jasp. Ay, I am his ghost,
Whom thou hast injured for his constant love.
Fond worldly wretch! who dost not understand
In death that true hearts cannot parted be.
First know, thy daughter is quite borne away
On wings of angels, through the liquid air,
Too far out of thy reach, and never more
Shalt thou behold her face: But she and I
Will in another world enjoy our loves;

[4] *Rosemary.*] This herb was used as an emblem at weddings as well as funerals. So in The Pilgrim—

"Well, well, since wedding will come after wooing,
Give me some *rosemary*, and let's be going."

See vol. V. p. 259, 526, and vol. XII. p. 434.

Where neither father's anger, poverty,
Nor any cross that troubles earthly men,
Shall make us sever our united hearts.
And never shalt thou sit, or be alone
In any place, but I will visit thee
With ghastly looks, and put into thy mind
The great offences which thou didst to me.
When thou art at thy table with thy friends,
Merry in heart, and filled with swelling wine,
I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
Invisible to all men but thyself,[5]
And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear,
Shall make thee let the cup fall from thy hand,
And stand as mute and pale as death itself.

Vent. Forgive me, Jasper! Oh, what might I do,
Tell me, to satisfy thy troubled ghost?

Jasp. There is no means; too late thou think'st of this.

Vent. But tell me what were best for me to do?

Jasp. Repent thy deed, and satisfy my father,
And beat fond Humphrey out of thy doors.
[*Exit.*

Enter HUMPHREY.

"*Wife.* Look, George; his very ghost would have folks beaten."

Hum. Father, my bride is gone, fair mistress Luce.
My soul's the fount of vengeance, mischief's sluice.

[5] *Invisible to all men but thyself.*] This seems to be meant as a ridicule on the appearance of Banquo's ghost in Macbeth.—Ed. 1778.

As there certainly seems to be an allusion to Macbeth in the text, the present play must have been produced after 1606, in which year Mr Malone and Mr Chalmers agree in placing the first appearance of that tragedy.

Vent. Hence, fool, out of my sight, with thy fond passion!
Thou hast undone me. [*Beats him.*

Hum Hold, my father dear!
For Luce thy daughter's sake, that had no peer.

Vent. Thy father, fool? There's some blows more; be gone!— [*Beats him again.*
Jasper, I hope thy ghost be well appeased
To see thy will performed. Now will I go
To satisfy thy father for thy wrongs. [*Exit.*

Hum. What shall I do? I have been beaten twice,
And mistress Luce is gone! Help me, Device!
Since my true love is gone, I never more,
Whilst I do live, upon the sky will pore;
But in the dark will wear out my shoe-soles
In passion, in Saint Faith's church under Paul's.[6]

"*Wife.* George, call Ralph hither; if you love me, call Ralph hither! I have the bravest thing for him to do——George! pr'ythee, call him quickly.

"*Cit.* Ralph! why, Ralph, boy!

Enter RALPH.

Ralph. Here, sir.

"*Cit.* Come hither, Ralph; come to thy mistress, boy.

"*Wife.* Ralph, I would have thee call all the

6 —— *Saint Faith's church under Paul's.*] This church was situated at the west end of Jesus's chapel, under the choir of St Paul's, and was frequented by the stationers and others dwelling in St Paul's Church-yard, Paternoster-Row, &c. Humphrey probably chooses to walk in it, not being equally thronged with a multitude of loungers and men of business as the cathedral was at the time,

youths together in battle-ray, with drums, and guns, and flags, and march to Mile-End[7] in pompous fashion, and there exhort your soldiers to be merry and wise, and to keep their beards from burning, Ralph; and then skirmish, and let your flags fly, and cry, "Kill, kill, kill!" My husband shall lend you his jerkin, Ralph, and there's a scarf; for the rest, the house shall furnish you, and we'll pay for't. Do it bravely, Ralph; and think before whom you perform, and what person you represent.

"*Ralph.* I warrant you, mistress; if I do it not, for the honour of the city, and the credit of my master, let me never hope for freedom!

"*Wife.* 'Tis well spoken, i'faith! Go thy ways; thou art a spark indeed.

"*Cit.* Ralph, Ralph, double your files bravely, Ralph![8]

"*Ralph.* I warrant you, sir. [*Exit.*

"*Cit.* Let him look narrowly to his service; I shall take him else. I was there myself a pikeman once, in the hottest of the day, wench; had my feather shot sheer away, the fringe of my pike burnt off with powder, my pate broken with a scouring-stick, and yet, I thank God, I am here.

[*Drums within.*

[7] *Mile-End.*] It has been before observed, that this was the place for training the citizens, who sometimes assembled in large bodies. Stowe informs us, that in 1585, four thousand, and in 1599, thirty thousand citizens were trained there.

[8] *Ralph, Ralph, double your files bravely, Ralph!*] Foote had probably this scene in view when he wrote his Mayor of Garrat. —*Mason.*

The facetious Ned Ward, one of the heroes of the Dunciad, has lavished his ridicule on the train-bands of his day with considerable scurrility, and in his usual doggrel, though not without some portion of broad humour, in "The Battle without Bloodshed, or Martial Discipline buffooned by the City Train-Bands."

"*Wife.* Hark, George, the drums!

"*Cit.* Ran, tan, tan, tan, ran, tan! Oh, wench, an thou hadst but seen little Ned of Aldgate, drum Ned, how he made it roar again, and laid on like a tyrant, and then struck softly till the ward came up, and then thundered again, and together we go! sa, sa, sa, bounce, quoth the guns! "courage, my hearts," quoth the captains! "Saint George," quoth the pike-men! and withal, here they lay, and there they lay! And yet for all this I am here, wench.

"*Wife.* Be thankful for it, George; for indeed 'tis wonderful."

SCENE II.

Mile-End.

Enter RALPH, WILLIAM HAMERTON, GEORGE GREENGOOSE, *and Others of his Company, with Drums and Colours.*

Ralph. March fair, my hearts![9] lieutenant, beat the rear up. Ancient, let your colours fly; but have a great care of the butchers' hooks at White-

[9] *March fair, my hearts,* &c.] As Ralph's part seems intended for metre, (though this whole scene has hitherto been printed as prose,) we have endeavoured to divide it accordingly, and hope it is settled tolerably right.—Ed. 1778.

The scene is much better in its original state in the old copies. A few lines only in Ralph's address to his soldiers are evidently mock-heroic verses.

chapel; they have been the death of many a fair ancient. Open your files, that I may take a view both of your persons and munition. Sergeant, call a muster.

Serg. A stand!—William Hamerton, pewterer!

Ham. Here, captain.

Ralph. A corslet and a Spanish pike! 'tis well: Can you shake it with a terror?

Ham. I hope so, captain.

Ralph. Charge upon me.—'Tis with the weakest: Put more strength, William Hamerton, more strength. As you were again. Proceed, Sergeant.

Serg. George Greengoose, poulterer!

Green. Here!

Ralph. Let me see your piece, neighbour Greengoose; when was she shot in?

Green. An't like you, master captain, I made a shot even now, partly to scour her, and partly for audacity.

Ralph. It should seem so certainly; for her breath is yet inflamed. Besides, there is a main fault in the touch-hole, it runs and stinketh: And I tell you moreover, and believe it, ten such touch-holes would breed the pox i' th' army. Get you a feather, neighbour, get you a feather, sweet oil, and paper, and your piece may do well enough yet. Where's your powder.

Green. Here.

Ralph. What, in a paper? as I am a soldier and a gentleman, it craves a martial court! You ought to die for't. Where's your horn? Answer me to that.

Green. An't like you, sir, I was oblivious.

Ralph. It likes me not you should be so; 'tis a shame for you, and a scandal to all our neighbours, being a man of worth and estimation, to leave your horn behind you: I am afraid 'twill

breed example. But let me tell you, no more on't. Stand, till I view you all. What's become o' th' nose of your flask?

1 *Sold.* Indeed-la, captain, 'twas blown away with powder.

Ralph. Put on a new one at the city's charge. Where's the stone of this piece?

2 *Sold.* The drummer took it out to light tobacco.

Ralph. 'Tis a fault, my friend; put it in again. You want a nose, and you a stone; Sergeant, take a note on't, for I mean to stop it in the pay. Remove and march! [*They march.*] Soft and fair, gentlemen, soft and fair! Double your files; as you were! faces about![1] Now, you with the sodden face, keep in there! Look to your match, sirrah, it will be in your fellow's flask anon. So; make a crescent now; advance your pikes; stand and give ear!—Gentlemen, countrymen, friends, and my fellow-soldiers, I have brought you this day from the shops of security, and the counters of content, to measure out in these furious fields, honour by the ell, and prowess by the pound. Let it not, oh, let it not, I say, be told hereafter, the noble issue of this city fainted; but bear yourselves in this fair action like men, valiant men, and free men! Fear not the face of the enemy, nor the noise of the guns; for, believe me, brethren, the rude rumbling of a brewer's cart is far more terrible, of which you have a daily experience: Neither let the stink of powder offend you, since a more valiant stink is nightly with

[1] *Faces about.*] A common phrase, equivalent to the modern expression—*face about.* So in The Scornful Lady, (vol. II. p. 262) —"Cutting Morecraft, *faces about*: I must present another."

you. To a resolved mind, his home is every where:
I speak not this to take away
The hope of your return; for you shall see
(I do not doubt it) and that very shortly
Your loving wives again, and your sweet children,
Whose care doth bear you company in baskets.
Remember then whose cause you have in hand,
And, like a sort[2] of true-born scavengers,
Scour me this famous realm of enemies.
I have no more to say but this: Stand to your tacklings, lads, and shew to the world, you can as well brandish a sword as shake an apron. Saint George, and on, my hearts!

All. Saint George, Saint George! [*Exeunt.*[3]

[2] *And like a* sort *of true-born scavengers.*] *Sort* is here used in its obsolete sense of *company*. So in The Spanish Tragedy:

"Here are a *sort* of poor petitioners."

[3] *St George.*] While we smile at this humorous account of the discipline practised by the citizens of London, it may not be unnecessary to recollect the behaviour of these same train-bands in the civil wars which ensued shortly afterwards, and especially at the battle of Newbury: "The London train-bands, and auxiliary regiment," says Lord Clarendon, "of whose inexperience of danger, or any kind of practice beyond the easy practice of their postures in the Artillery-garden, men had, till then, too cheap an estimation, behaved themselves to wonder, and were in truth the preservation of that army that day. For they stood as a bulwark and rampire to defend the rest; and when their wings of horse were scattered and dispersed, kept their ground so steadily, that though Prince Rupert himself led up the choice horse to charge them, and endured their storm of small shot, he could make no impression upon their stand of pikes, but was forced to wheel about; of such sovereign benefit and use is that readiness, order, and dexterity, in the use of their arms, which hath been so much neglected."—*History of the Rebellion, Book II.*

" *Wife*. 'Twas well done, Ralph! I'll send thee a cold capon a-field, and a bottle of March beer; and, it may be, come myself to see thee.

" *Cit*. Nell, the boy hath deceived me much! I did not think it had been in him. He has performed such a matter, wench, that, if I live, next year I'll have him captain of the gallifoist,[3] or I'll want my will."

SCENE III.

A Room in Old Merrythought's *House*.

Enter Old MERRYTHOUGHT.

Mer. Yet, I thank God, I break not a wrinkle more than I had. Not a stoop, boys?[4] Care, live with cats: I defy thee! My heart is as sound as an oak; and though I want drink to wet my whistle, I can sing, [*Sings*.

Come no more there, boys, come no more there;
For we shall never whilst we live come any more there.

[3] *Captain of the* gallifoist.] *Gallifoist* was the old name for the Lord Mayor's barge.—*Mason*.

[4] *Not a* stoop, *boys?*] A vessel for drinking, deep and narrow. In Scotland and the north of England the word is still common.

Enter a Boy, and two Men bringing in the Coffin, with LUCE *in it.*

Boy. God save you, sir!
Mer. It's a brave boy. Canst thou sing?
Boy. Yes, sir, I can sing; but 'tis not so necessary at this time.

Mer. *Sing we, and chaunt it,*
Whilst love doth grant it.

Boy. Sir, sir, if you knew what I have brought you, you would have little list to sing.

Mer. *Oh, the mimon round,*
Full long I have thee sought,
And now I have thee found,
And what hast thou here brought?

Boy. A coffin, sir, and your dead son Jasper in it.

Mer. *Dead? Why, farewell he!*
Thou wast a bonny boy,
And I did love thee.

Enter JASPER.

Jasp. Then I pray you, sir, do so still.
Mer. Jasper's ghost? [*Sings.*

Thou art welcome from Stygian-lake so soon;
Declare to me what wondrous things in Pluto's court are done.

Jasp. By my troth, sir, I ne'er came there; 'tis too hot for me, sir.

Mer. A merry ghost, a very merry ghost! [*Sings.*

And where is your true love? Oh, where is yours?

Jasp. Marry, look you, sir! [*Opens the Coffin.*

Mer. Ah, ha! art thou good at that, i'faith? [*Sings.*

With hey tricksy terlerie-whiskin,[5]
The world it runs on wheels.
When the young man's ——
Up goes the maiden's heels.

Mrs MERRYTHOUGHT *and* MICHAEL *within.*

Mrs Mer. What, master Merrythought! will you not let's in! What do you think shall become of us?

Mer. What voice is that that calleth at our door?

Mrs Mer. You know me well enough; I am sure I have not been such a stranger to you.

Mer. [Sings.] *And some they whistled, and some they sung,*
Hey down, down!
And some did loudly say,
Ever as the lord Barnet's horn blew.
Away, Musgrave, away.[6]

5 *Terlerie-whiskin.*] This was a cant-phrase of the time. In the Lady's Trial by Ford, we have *terlery-puf kins. Whiskin* occurs twice with no very determinate meaning in the same author's Fancies Chaste and Noble. The vacancy in the third line of this stanza may be supplied but too easily.

6 *And some they whistled,* &c.] This stanza is taken from the

Mrs Mer. You will not have us starve here, will you, master Merrythought?

Jasp. Nay, good sir, be persuaded; she's my mother:
If her offences have been great against you,
Let your own love remember she is yours,
And so forgive her.[7]

Luce. Good master Merrythought,
Let me entreat you; I will not be denied.

Mrs Mer. Why, master Merrythought, will you be a vex'd thing still?

Mer. Woman, I take you to my love again; but you shall sing before you enter; therefore dispatch your song, and so come in.

Mrs Mer. Well, you must have your will, when all's done:—Micke, what song canst thou sing, boy?

Mich. I can sing none forsooth, but 'A Lady's Daughter of Paris,' properly.

[*Sings within.*

It was a lady's daughter, &c.

ballad of Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard, printed in Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry, vol. iii. p. 64, where it runs thus:

"Then some they whistled, and some they sung,
And some did loudlye saye,
Whenever lord Barnardes horne it blewe,
Away, Musgrave, away."

[7] *If her offences have been great against you,*
Let your own love remember she is yours,
And so forgive her.] This may mean, "Let your self-love tell you that she is a part of yourself, and so forgive her." Yet I think it probable that we ought to read—"Let your *old love*"—that is, your former affection.—*Mason.*

Enter Mrs MERRYTHOUGHT *and* MICHAEL.

Mer. Come, you're welcome home again.

If such danger be in playing,
And jest must to earnest turn,
You shall go no more a-Maying——

Vent. [*Within.*] Are you within, sir? master Merrythought!

Jasp. It is my master's voice; good sir, go hold him
In talk whilst we convey ourselves into
Some inward room. [*Exit with* LUCE.

Mer. What are you? are you merry?
You must be very merry, if you enter.

Vent. I am, sir.

Mer. Sing then.

Vent. Nay, good sir, open to me.

Mer. Sing, I say,
Or, by the merry heart, you come not in!

Vent. Well, sir, I'll sing. [*Sings.*

Fortune my foe,[8] &c.

Enter VENTERWELS.

Mer. You're welcome, sir, you're welcome!
You see your entertainment; pray you be merry.

Vent. Oh, master Merrythought, I'm come to ask you

[8] *Fortune my foe.*] See The Custom of the Country, vol. II. p. 279, where the first stanza of this highly popular song will be found. It is also alluded to in Brome's Antipodes, and in The Two Merry Milkmaids, by J. C.

Forgiveness for the wrongs I offer'd you,
And your most virtuous son; they are infinite,
Yet my contrition shall be more than they.
I do confess my hardness broke his heart,
For which just Heaven hath giv'n me punishment
More than my age can carry; his wand'ring spirit,
Not yet at rest, pursues me every where,
Crying, "I'll haunt thee for thy cruelty."
My daughter she is gone, I know not how,
Taken invisible, and whether living,
Or in the grave, 'tis yet uncertain to me.
Oh, master Merrythought, these are the weights
Will sink me to my grave! Forgive me, sir.

Mer. Why, sir, I do forgive you; and be merry!
And if the wag in's lifetime play'd the knave,
Can you forgive him too?

Vent. With all my heart, sir.

Mer. Speak it again, and heartily.

Vent. I do, sir;
Now, by my soul, I do.

Mer. [Sings.] *With that came out his paramour;*
She was as white as the lily flower.
Hey troul, troly, loly!

Enter LUCE *and* JASPER.

With that came out her own dear knight,
He was as true as ever did fight, &c.

Sir, if you will forgive 'em, clap their hands together; there's no more to be said i' th' matter.

Vent. I do, I do.

"*Cit.* I do not like this: Peace, boys! Hear me, one of you! every body's part is come to an end but Ralph's, and he's left out.

"*Boy.* 'Tis long of yourself, sir; we have nothing to do with his part.

"*Cit.* Ralph, come away! Make [an end] on him,[9] as you have done of the rest, boys; come!

"*Wife.* Now, good husband, let him come out and die.

"*Cit.* He shall, Nell.—Ralph, come away quickly, and die, boy.

"*Boy.* 'Twill be very unfit he should die, sir, upon no occasion; and in a comedy too.

"*Cit.* Take you no care of that, Sir Boy; is not his part at an end, think you, when he's dead?—Come away, Ralph!"

Enter RALPH, *with a forked Arrow through his Head.*

Ralph. When I was mortal,[1] this my costive corps
Did lap up figs and raisins in the Strand;
Where sitting, I espied a lovely dame,
Whose master wrought with lingell[2] and with awl,
And underground he vamped many a boot:
Straight did her love prick forth me, tender sprig,
To follow feats of arms in warlike wise,

[9] *Make on him.*] The two words which we have added seem absolutely necessary to the completion of the sense.—Ed. 1778.

[1] *When I was mortal,* &c.] This speech is a parody on that of the Ghost of Andrea, at the beginning of the famous play of Jeronimo:

"When this eternal substance of my soul
Did live imprison'd in my wanton flesh," &c.—*Reed.*

This speech is ridiculed in several old plays; among others in Albumazar.

[2] *Lingell.*] A thread of hemp rubbed with rosin, &c. used by rustics for mending their shoes.—*Percy.*

4

Through Waltham-Desert; where I did perform
Many achievements, and did lay on ground
Huge Barbaroso, that insulting giant,
And all his captives soon set at liberty.
Then honour prick'd me from my native soil
Into Moldavia, where I gain'd the love
Of Pompiona, his beloved daughter;
But yet proved constant to the black-thumb'd maid,
Susan, and scorned Pompiona's love;
Yet liberal I was, and gave her pins,
And money for her father's officers.
I then returned home, and thrust myself
In action, and by all men chosen was
Lord of the May; where I did flourish it,
With scarfs and rings, and poesy in my hand.[3]
After this action I preferred was,
And chosen city-captain at Mile-End,
With hat and feather, and with leading staff,
And train'd my men, and brought them all off clear,
Save one man that bewrayed him with the noise.
But all these things I Ralph did undertake,
Only for my beloved Susan's sake.
Then coming home, and sitting in my shop
With apron blue, Death came into my stall
To cheapen *aquavitæ*; but ere I
Could take the bottle down, and fill a taste,
Death caught a pound of pepper in his hand,
And sprinkled all my face and body o'er,
And in an instant vanished away.
"*Cit.* 'Tis a pretty fiction, i'faith!"

[3] *And* poesy *in my hand.*] The orthography varied by Sympson to *posie.*—Ed. 1778

There is no occasion to vary the orthography. *Poesy* is continually used in the same sense as *posy* in old plays; but, in the present case, it refers to the rhymes which Ralph reads at the conclusion of the fourth act, standing as May-lord on the conduit.

Ralph. Then took I up my bow and shaft in hand,
And walked into Moorfields to cool myself:
But there grim cruel Death met me again,
And shot this forked arrow through my head;
And now I faint; therefore be warn'd by me,
My fellows every one, of forked heads!
Farewell, all you good boys in merry London!
Ne'er shall we more upon Shrove-Tuesday meet,
And pluck down houses of iniquity;
(My pain increaseth) I shall never more
Hold open, whilst another pumps both legs,
Nor daub a sattin gown with rotten eggs;
Set up a stake, oh, never more I shall!
I die! fly, fly, my soul, to Grocers' Hall!
Oh, oh, oh, &c.

"*Wife.* Well said, Ralph! do your obeisance to the gentlemen, and go your ways. Well said, Ralph!" [*Exit* RALPH.

Mer. Methinks all we, thus kindly and unexpectedly reconciled, should not depart without a song.

Vent. A good motion.

Mer. Strike up then!

SONG.

Better music ne'er was known
Than a quire of hearts in one.
Let each other, that hath been
Troubled with the gall or spleen,
Learn of us to keep his brow
Smooth and plain, as ours are now!
Sing, though before the hour of dying;
He shall rise, and then be crying,
"Heyho, 'tis nought but mirth
That keeps the body from the earth."

[Exeunt.

EPILOGUS.

" *Cit.* Come, Nell, shall we go? the play's done.

" *Wife.* Nay, by my faith, George, I have more manners than so; I'll speak to these gentlemen first.—I thank you all, gentlemen, for your patience and countenance to Ralph, a poor fatherless child! and if I might see you at my house, it should go hard but I would have a pottle of wine, and a pipe of tobacco for you; for truly I hope you do like the youth; but I would be glad to know the truth: I refer it to your own discretions, whether you will applaud him or no; for I will wink, and, whilst, you shall do what you will.—I thank you with all my heart. God give you good night!—Come, George." [*Exeunt.*

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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